GALUT

YITZHAK F. BAER

A brilliant historical essay examining *Galut*, the Exile, as the central concept of Jewish history since the time of the dispersion of the Jewish people from Palestine.

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YITZHAK F. BAER

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GALUT

CHAPTER I

THE JEWISH CONCEPT OF HISTORY DURING LATE ANTIQUITY

The word "Galut" embraces a whole world of facts and ideas that have appeared with varying strength and clarity in every age of Jewish history. Political servitude and dispersion, the longing for liberation and reunion, sin and repentance and atonement: these are the larger elements that must go to make up the concept of Galut if the word is to retain any real meaning.

The picture begins to take shape at the time of the Second Temple. A national state still exists in Palestine, and the holy place embodying a power sufficient to redeem all humanity still stands. The goal is to bring the whole world under the leadership of the Jews and to the salvation of their religion; the Diaspora is not simply a consequence of political enslavement—it serves also to spread the knowledge of the true Teaching throughout the world. True, the political situation of the Jews does not permit the attainment of this ideal. Enslaved, contemned, and rejected, all over the world the Jews pray that they may be politically reunited on their own soil —only then will it be possible to fulfil the whole Law. For *politeia* (the order of law and doctrine), nation and soil belong together.

Thus in the Hellenistic-Roman Diaspora we can already distinguish all the essential elements of the medieval Galut. And antisemitism, too, makes its appearance. Antisemitism is the inevitable consequence of the Jews' exalted consciousness of religious superiority and of their mission among the nations, a con-

sciousness all the more infuriating because it exists in a nation totally without power. The problem of being a Jew is inseparably bound up with the Galut. Already it is a distinguishing mark of Galut that there is persecution, outrage, and injustice from which specious privileges give no relief.

The nation suffers because of its faith. "For Thy sake are we killed all the day; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter" (Ps. 44:23). The nation is so proud of its martyrs because, in effect, the whole nation has consecrated its life to martyrdom and taken upon itself the yoke of the kingdom of God. But suffering for the sake of the unity and the freedom of the people is also part of this martyrdom. Even in Philo the messianic hope of reunion is as strong as it was in the later prophets and will be in every medieval Jew, and it expresses itself in the same terms—by divine force shall the Jews be brought to Palestine, simultaneously and from every corner of the earth.

The destruction of the Second Temple widens the breach in the nation's historical continuity and augments the treasury of national-religious jewels whose loss is to be mourned: the Temple and its cult, the mutilated theocracy, the national autonomy, the holy soil ever further from reclamation. "The righteous are in their graves and the prophets sleep, but we are driven from our land, Zion is taken from us and we have nothing now but God and his Torah" (Syr. Apoc. of Baruch). Because of this the growing tradition of Torah interpretation becomes a crucial factor in the life of the people—but the Torah is still but one surviving part of the holy structure of nation, law, and land that an imminent redemption is to bring together again in all its completeness. This certainty of speedy redemption is grounded upon the promises of the

prophets and upon a concept of history that lives in the heart of the nation and has been pondered and broadened, in close connection with the Bible, from generation to generation.

The Bible had told of the slow process of selection and ripening that took place among God's people; it confirmed their claim to the promised land of Palestine and showed them their special place in the history of the nations. The Midrash completed the concept of history that developed during the time of the Second Temple, and lovingly depicted the nation's character and the process of redemption that was the meaning of its history and of the history of all humanity. For the creators of the Midrash, the only true history has been set down once and for all in the Holy Scriptures. The Scriptures are the master pattern of all later history; what has happened once must happen over and over again in ever-widening circles, and thus the individual event of later times loses even its individual value.

Certainly the history of the nations was not ignored; the Jews made learned parallel compilations of sacred and profane history, which were later carried forward by the Christians. But the history of the Jewish people remains distinct from the astrologically determined history of the nations (i.e., a history determined by causes operating within the finished framework of nature), for the Jewish people in its special relationship to God is removed from the context of natural law.

The gradual descent of the *Shekhinah* (the Divine Indwelling) on Israel and the holy places is described again and again in the Midrash, most profoundly in the commentary on the Song of Songs. From this description, world history is revealed as a universal process of redemption fulfilling itself in fixed stages foreseen by

God. As there were six days for the Creation, so there are six ages of world history: the first four days of the holy history, during which the Temple still stands, are followed by the fifth and sixth days bringing the ascendancy of the wild beasts—i.e., the empires of this world—until the Sabbath of the world will restore the disturbed harmony on earth and in heaven. The surviving Jewish literature from this period frequently classifies history in terms of the rise and fall of empires. The process of atonement consists in Israel's enslavement by the empires and expiatory pilgrimage among the nations; the meaning of this process is immeasurably deepened by the idea that the *Shekhinah* itself takes part in the Galut and also waits for deliverance. And the picture of the suffering servant of God in the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah is already accepted in the Diaspora at this time as the permanent symbol of the sufferings of the Jews in the Galut—which is the meaning given this passage by the Jews of the Middle Ages. Even the deaths of the martyrs of Bar Kokhba's rebellion are regarded as atonement for the sins of all mankind. Like the blissful Golden Age, so also the martyrdom of later ages is symbolized in the Song of Songs, "for it is all fear of God and assumption of the yoke of the kingdom of heaven." The more terrible the suffering of the Diaspora, the more it operates as seed thrown forth in the world for the dissemination of the true faith. Abraham, the primal ancestor of Israel, is the prototype of the pilgrim who wanders through the world to usher *gerim* (proselytes) under the wing of the *Shekhinah*.

Thus the Galut acquires its place in history, but only in order that its abolition may be the more surely guaranteed. Martyrdom is at the same time a fight for national autonomy, for a home soil, for a base of rebellion

against the supremacy of Edom (Rome), the last empire. The struggles of the Zealots for political freedom and the firm establishment of God's supremacy continued from the time of Bar Kokhba's revolt up to the conquest of Palestine by the Arabs. Only after stubborn resistance was the lesson learned: that love cannot be prematurely aroused, that the kingdom of God cannot be set up by force, that one cannot rise in rebellion against the overlordship of the nations.

THE IDEA OF GALUT IN THE TEACHINGS OF THE CHURCH FATHERS

The Jews gave to Europe the laws that govern its religious experience, insofar as these laws are derived from the concept of man's responsibility before God and the attainment of his inner freedom through love of God. But the Jews gave more than this: until the age of romanticism, the best that Europe had to say on the subject of nation and history stemmed also from Jewish sources.

The historical thinking of the Middle Ages is Jewish doctrine; Christianity took the historical-religious ideas of the Jews out of their original context and transposed them into the idiom of the Western peoples. To the extent that modern scholarship has failed to seek a true understanding of Jewish historical thought, to that extent has it failed until now to recognize the Jewish foundation on which rest the theology of history and the moral precepts taught by the Church Fathers.

In the teaching of the Fathers, the historic role of God's people is taken over in the concept of the *Civitas Dei*, which consists of the secretly chosen ones who wander on a pilgrimage through the world. The meaning of the word "Galut," in its dual aspect of religious propaganda and of suffering for the sake of humanity's redemption, is given to the idea of the *Civitas Dei*, while the true Galut of the Jewish people, stripped of its meaning as sacred history, of the drama of salvation, becomes an object of contempt and ridicule. But in practice the Church allied itself with the heathen empire, and the clear boundaries separating enslaved

Israel from ruling Edom were blurred and lost in the changing relations between Church and state.

In Paul's view, the political bondage of the Jews was the visible manifestation of an inner bondage, and this in turn provided justification for tightening the political bondage. The prophets of ancient Israel had prophesied the Galut to their own people in order to bring about an internal conversion. But the declarations of the Christian theologians, damning the Jews to eternal servitude, were aimed at strangers outside the group to which the authors of these declarations belonged—and they made sure that the servitude they prophesied should come to pass.

The history of antisemitism here reaches its high point. No earlier enemy had looked with so strong a hatred at the historical-religious position of the Jewish people, into whose inheritance these new persecutors believed themselves to have entered. On the other hand, a certain timidity kept them from completely exterminating the people from whom they had consciously taken the best of their own teachings. Out of these ambivalent feelings there grew the artificial doctrine of the necessary preservation of the Jews until the end of days. According to this doctrine, the Jews are scattered through the world in order that they may serve, through their books and miserable condition, as a testimony to the truth of Christianity. The Jews wander through the world like Cain—who is for Jew and Christian alike the archetype of the penitent pilgrim—and the sign of the Covenant, which was for the Jews a guarantee of survival, is now, like the sign of Cain, a mark of evil—"lest any finding him should smite him" (Gen. 4:15). Thus the Jews are condemned to perpetual political servitude, and handed over to the kings and princes of the nations.

FROM ANTIQUITY TO THE MIDDLE AGES

These were the historical elements and ideological presuppositions that created the Galut situation of the Middle Ages. But it was only in the centuries between the victory of Christianity and the First Crusade that the last practical consequences of these beginnings developed. Only through the general change in the political outlook that took place during this period was Judaism finally set on its peculiar historical path.

A deliberate policy of the Christian *Imperium Romanum*, adopted later by the rulers of Islam, drove the Jews from their home. In Islam, there came into existence a second monotheistic world power that claimed to have entered into the inheritance of Israel, and this power likewise oppressed the Jews under the forms created by the Christians. Thus the Jews became a class of human beings marked out for religious and political persecution throughout the world. The rulers of Christian countries, guided by the Church, subjected the Jews to a fitful system of forced conversion and expulsion, backed up by artificially contrived pogroms. Only at the time of the Crusades did the Church adopt the official position that forced baptisms and bloody persecutions of the Jews were not permissible; and even then the Church held that the Jews were to be kept under constant pressure, so that they might be led to turn contritely to the true faith: by a logical application of the teaching of the early Church, the Jews were now fixed legally in the status of serfs to the kings.

The real logic of this status is to be found in the

requirements of practical policy. The Jews were a valuable factor in economic expansion, in the development of the cities, and in trade; and they were of great service as political middlemen. This fact brought about an essential alteration in the economic condition of the Jews. At the end of the period of Imperial Rome, the Jews were in no way essentially distinguishable in the general economic and social structure. But from the sixth century on, the systematic harrying of the Jews from place to place, together with the general European shift to the economic and social forms of feudalism, uprooted the Jews from the soil and forced them into an unnatural position as traders and middlemen. Lacking rights and power, the Jews now constituted a very useful tool in the political maneuvers of the ruling class, a tool that could always be discarded or destroyed once it had served its purpose. This explains the employment of Jews as financial administrators and court functionaries in the Christian and Islamic states; Christians performed similar service in the Islamic states, where they were in a similar position as members of a religious and social minority.

Their economic function brought about a still more significant change in the political orientation of the Jews. From this point on, the center of gravity of Jewish policy, and therefore of Jewish culture as well, lay in the courts of foreign powers. It was for this reason that the schools of Babylon gained the ascendancy over the schools of Palestine. But the Jews still held fast to their settlements in Palestine up to the time of the First Crusade, and in the observances of the holy calendar the Holy Land continually claimed its position of preeminence. Bound up as it was with Jewish tradition, Palestine could still serve as the center of the political

and geographical world picture. The sphere of Islamic culture, comprising within its area all the Jews from Iraq to Spain—and thus the overwhelming majority of the Jews of the world—corresponded more or less to the periphery of the Roman *orbis terrarum.* As late as the eleventh century, the Spanish statesman Samuel ha-Nagid maintains an active connection with the teachers of Palestine: he reports to them on his political successes and victorious battles; he sends them verses charged with longing for the holy soil once blessed by the proximity of God; he tells them of his sorrow at living exiled in a strange and unholy land. This versifying Jewish statesman, who seems to anticipate the longing for Zion of a Judah ha-Levi (*ca.* 1083-1142), stands clearly at a turning point. He is the last Jewish politician, in the full sense of the term: he planned to make the state of Granada a bulwark for Judaism; he accompanied the troops to battle, perhaps even fought at their side, and his verses display an interest in warfare that is completely foreign to the Jews who came after him. But the longing for Palestine expressed by this man who was at once a talmudist of importance and a champion of his faith is really a romantic longing that requires no fulfilment. There is no doubt that Palestine at that time had already become for many Jews a land of penitents and ascetics who—like the Karaites—dwelt on the holy soil in mourning for the lost glory of the Temple. Already the warnings are beginning, and not without cause: Do not be too comfortable in the Galut; support the settlement in Palestine.

In this period we find the last manifestations of a warlike spirit among the Jews. In the seventh century, the Jews still took an active military part in the strug-

gle for control of Palestine between Rome and Persia, between Rome and Islam, which they interpreted in eschatological terms. But from then on, the nation definitely submitted to the admonitions of its teachers. God had made his will manifest; it was his will that the Jews should bear the yoke of foreign nations. The Jews left the ranks of warring nations and put their fate altogether in the hands of God—a unique historical fact to which no historian has yet given its proper importance.

After the seventh century, we no longer find warlike tribes like the Arabian Jews, or converted foreign peoples like the Khazars—these recede into the realm of wish and fantasy. Because of the ruling religions, the drive to convert the Gentiles, still not altogether destroyed by the time of the seventeenth century, had to be reduced to occasional individual conversions—a few in every generation, to be sure. The *Nesiim* (patriarchs in Jerusalem) and exilarchs of the line of David (Heads of the Babylonian Exile), who until the time of the Crusades and even to some extent thereafter were the real and sacral repositories of the political future, no longer have any importance. And the idea of the Messiah takes wing and flies to the farthest realm of wonders. Beginning in the seventh century, the same scene is imagined generation after generation: On some fine day all the Jews of the world will pack their baggage and prepare themselves in holiday clothes to be transported to their home—on clouds, or by the hands of angels. Time and again there appear persons claiming to be the Messiah or his forerunners. Behind this phenomenon lay always a real belief that God could not refuse to answer if there was a sufficient inner preparation and purification on the part of the people.

The rabbinical authorities regarded these folk movements with a certain reserve, not because they had no faith in the miracle, but because they believed that the liberation had also to be a real political liberation. On the one hand, these advocates of prudence held out against the popular enthusiasm; on the other hand, they themselves gave out prophecies of a more authentic nature. In this regard, not even the later philosophical rationalism could create a clear opposition between the learned and the masses.

The Jewish idea of the Messiah, from its beginning until the time of Sabbatai Zevi, was able to embrace and reconcile the most disparate elements of national mythology and theological dogma. However much it was mocked, this idea, not only in its biblical but in its medieval form as well, had a direct effect on European thinking. Without the Messiah of medieval Judaism, the European folk dreams about lords and redeemers living in obscurity until the appointed time of return would not have been possible. But the spread of these ideas was only possible where the world shared the eschatological conviction of the Jews: that history is a process of exile and redemption, fixed from the beginning—a movement back to a lost Golden Age. Through penance, and through a wise policy of preparation for what history has in store, it is possible for men to hasten the process; but political and spiritual redemption can proceed only from God.

Seen in these terms, the "Jewish problem" is freed of all the social concomitants that surrounded it in antiquity and have surrounded it again since the end of the Middle Ages. The point at issue here is the problem of Jewish election and the Jewish people's historic mission, which is to be demonstrated by the

active intervention of God. And there was a moment when all the forces of history seemed to be directed toward the solution of the great problem, at the time when the last Jewish settlements in Palestine were destroyed by the Crusaders.

THE AGE OF THE CRUSADES

In this period, Diaspora means dispersion without any visible political center. The separation from the homeland is most complete in the communities of northern France and Germany. But even there the communities feel themselves to be scattered members of the nation that is one day to be reunited in Palestine. If indeed the Galut retains nothing of the divine state except the Torah, then the energy of the community must be devoted first of all to the study of Torah. And so the Jewish communities of northern France and Germany, often very small, organize themselves into Talmud schools; circles and organizations are formed, devoted to the reading of ethical writings and mystical speculations. In the south, the social structure is differentiated, and the Jews are much more strongly affected by the philosophical and political culture of the Arabs. But all the communities are dominated by a sharply defined religious-national idea of history. Behind them lies the great past, when the Jews lived united in Palestine and fulfilled the law of God. The whole body of the law, again and again recodified and reinterpreted, is a fixed and shining reality; likewise the half-mythical *aggadot* (parables based on scriptural passages); likewise the old cult and service of the Temple; likewise the soil of Palestine and the always expected redemption and re-establishment of the Temple and the state.

For a visible object of veneration, there could now remain only the land itself where all the wonders had

once taken place and were to take place again. There were not many who could know the happiness of seeing that land, and even for the lucky ones the happiness was surely three parts sorrow. Nevertheless, all these images and ideas brought light and strength into the life of the individual.

For these generations, there was new meaning in the story of the Second Temple, retold, after Josephus and his Christian revisers, by the little-known Joseph bin Gorion (Yosippon, 1st cent.)—not only Hannah and her seven sons, but the ill-famed Zealots too had given up their lives in a heroic struggle to sanctify the divine name; they too had set a worthy example for others. If, through Vespasian and Titus, the Jews had been delivered over to the medieval version of the Christian Roman Empire, and if God's will required them to be subservient, yet they did not fail to see clear signs pointing to a speedy liberation.

The Christians, reviving the polemics of the early Church, called this faith childish and materialistic. The Jews, for their part, felt themselves superior to "idolatry" and the "irrational" christological dogmas. They were convinced that the day of the Messiah could not have come so long as war still existed, and they pointed out, in consequence, that rapacious lords and knights had no right to pass themselves off as representatives of the messianic faith. The essential point in the controversy between the two religions lay in the discussion of the legitimate historical heritage, which could only be resolved by an appeal to the historical record contained in the Holy Scriptures. So the historical-theological speculations of the Midrash and the patristics were renewed in the tractates and commentaries of the early scholastics and the Jewish exegetes and glossologists. The historical significance of such a commentator

as Rashi (1040-1105) lies in the fact that with wonderful harmoniousness and sureness he could give his contemporaries so firm a picture of their tradition that they were enabled to hold fast against all attacks.

The Jews did not remain on the defensive, but tried to spread their faith, and to win proselytes, who in the day of the Messiah might have their share in the redemption of Israel. Naturally, their propaganda was much more limited than it had been in the heathen Hellenistic-Roman world. But they castigated the apostates with no less fury than they had shown in the old days, and they left no means untried to protect the weak of faith from foreign influences and to prevent their final apostasy. When the hour of persecution came, sparing no community and no generation, it was necessary above all else that the faith should be preserved.

The best descriptions left us of the persecutions that took place at the time of the First Crusade are to be found in Hebrew records. These were constructed from shorter reports describing the happenings in individual places and provinces, and encountered similar pamphlets with opposite tendencies that were circulated by the Christians. In this age, religious-national martyrdom reaches its highest expression. These martyrs are no seekers after death like the early Christians, no heroes challenging destiny. Violence and death come unsought. And the whole community suffers—old and young, women and children, willing or not. At first they fight for the preservation of the community, and they hold off their enemies before the walls of the episcopal palace or the fortress just as long as defense is possible. But then, when all hope for safety is gone, they are ready for martyrdom. No scene is more stirring than the Sabbath meal of the pious

Jews in Xanten (1096): Hardly had the grace before the meal been recited when the news came of the enemy's approach; immediately they fulfilled the ceremony of the closing grace, recited the formula expressing faith in the oneness of God, and carried out the terrible act of sacrifice that was renewed again and again, generation after generation, from the time of Massada. The martyrologies have described in frightful clarity the ritual of voluntary mutual slaughter (not the sacrifice of enemies, falsely ascribed to the Jews), and have glorified it in poetry modeled after the sacrifice of Isaac (*Akedat Yitzhak*).

The individualistic religious poetry of Europe pales before the national-religious poetry that the Jews produced in this age. Like the chivalric epic—but with how different a meaning!—the poetry of the Jews is the very life of the folk: the whole people enters into its religious lyricism. *Piyyutim* are added to the prescribed prayer book, poems that keep the image of the great past and the promised future alive and fresh. The earlier *piyyutim* were limited to glorifying the holy history, to mourning the fall of the Temple, and to expressing the eschatological hopes of the Jews by unclear allusions to the contemporary conflicts of the empires. But now came the *Selihot* (penitential poems), which depict the sufferings of the nation in the contemporary Galut—the pogroms come into the synagogue, the harried community puts all its suffering and all its hope into its prayers. Entire arguments from contemporary polemics against the Jews are discussed and confuted in the *piyyutim* without any impairment of their poetic quality. From these poems alone, one could construct the historical picture of the Galut.

But what is meaningful is not the particular suffer-

ings described in the poems, but rather the spirit in which these sufferings are accepted. In the Ashkenazic poets, one cannot fail to recognize a tone of indescribable bitterness. True, the martyrs of the time hold their rightful place beside the Maccabees and Rabbi Akiva, and they have added their weight to the nation's claim for redemption. Still: the prophets and the pious men of the past are gone, the Temple destroyed, the homeland in the hands of the enemy, one exile after another is the lot of Judah. "All exiles come to an end, only mine increases; all questions are answered, but my question returns ever to the place from which it came." This sounds like the apocalyptic writings from the time of the destruction of the Second Temple. The problem of theodicy faces an entire people. With Job, the nation cries out, "O earth, cover not thou my blood!" (Job 16:18). The *Selihot* end with pressing entreaties for justice for the murdered, for liberation and redemption.

We find a more comforting outlook in Spanish Jewish poetry and thought.

CHAPTER V

JUDAH HA-LEVI

At the time when the Jews of northern France and Germany were being slaughtered by the Crusaders, and the Jewish settlements in Palestine were being destroyed by Turkish and Christian marauders, the Jews of Spain found themselves caught directly between the warring camps of Christianity and Islam. "They fight their wars, and we fall with their fall; so it has always been with Israel."

The Spanish Jews had a clearer understanding of the world-shaking struggle that was evolving before their eyes. In the Jewish communities of Spain, with their broader social structure and their strong tradition of secular culture, the worldly elements of Judaism endured much longer than in the northern communities. Living in the world, and highly sophisticated in philosophy and politics, the Spanish Jews were able to look with critical eyes upon the situation of their people. They were also much more closely connected with everything that happened in Palestine, and had a more realistic view of the struggles there. It was in Spain that the old apocalyptic visions of the end of the world and of the imminent liberation were reinterpreted in terms of the events of the time.

A Spanish Jew, Abraham bar Hiyya, in his *Megillat ha-Megalle* ("Scroll of the Revealer"), written around 1129, made the first attempt at a new and systematic interpretation of the historical pattern that formed the basis of the earlier Midrash. For him, history is a process of redemption that develops according to the pat-

tern set by the process of the six days of creation. The ages of the world are to be defined according to the days of the creation, and the time of the world's end may be computed accordingly. Astrological calculations and a suitable interpretation of the Book of Daniel brought Abraham to the same conclusion. The Crusaders had fulfilled the prophecy of Daniel, profaning the holy places and expelling the Jews from Jerusalem; just as God had predetermined the Galut in the days of the creation, so the redemption was predetermined and certain to come. But the process of redemption applies essentially only to the Jews: the pure souls who, in the course of history from the creation to the time of the patriarchs, freed themselves from the bonds of their lower natures, appear only among the Jews—they do not inhabit the bodies of other peoples. The unbounded bitterness of the apocalyptic turns above all against the Christians, who were the first to challenge the Jewish inheritance in Palestine. For Abraham the inner progress of history really ended with the revelation on Sinai—all later events are merely steps upon the path that God had laid out from the beginning. Consequently, the phenomenon of the Galut itself receives little of his attention.

It is no accident that there should appear just at this time a "theology of history" that gathered together all the elements existing in the body of Jewish tradition and living in the consciousness of the people. In the same way, the early Christian scholasticism of the time revived the Augustinian theories of history—and doubtless with full awareness of the growing necessity for a debate with Judaism. An analogous awareness combines with the political experience of the age when Judah ha-Levi, in *Kuzari* (written about 1130-1140), speaks out against the influence of Arabic philosophy

and reminds the Spanish Jews of the basically historical character of the Jewish religion. The Jewish religion is not to be reduced to a collection of abstract articles of faith; it is bound up inextricably with the historical election and the historical destiny of Israel. But while Judah ha-Levi describes Israel's role in world history, he cleanses the idea of election of all bitterness and hatred, and transforms the drunken ecstasy of the apocalyptic into a serene resignation and readiness for martyrdom. Without sacrificing an iota of the "materialistic" Jewish world of ideas, he broadened the humanity of Jewish messianism beyond all the limits of medieval thought.

In *Kuzari*, a polemic against Christianity and Islam, Judah tells of the gradual process of selection by which the unworthy were eliminated and the people of God were chosen for their task as bearers of the "divine word." This historical process validates the Jews' hereditary claim to the Holy Land, the pledge, the true scene of the revelation. The election is tied to the physical body of Israel—a point Judah emphasizes in opposition to the claims of the rival religions—but it does not exclude those who are worthy among the communicants of other faiths. And the constitutions of other nations, which rest upon natural law and the law of reason, have a value of their own, although they are mere preliminaries to the divine Torah. Judah expressly rejects the religious intolerance of Abraham bar Hiyyah. However, his philosophical terminology, including the conception of a superhuman spiritual form that belongs uniquely to the Jews, leads to a fixed superhistorical world of ideas. This unnatural exaltation of the naive idea of election stands side by side with an astonishingly strong awareness of the inadequacies of the actual Jews, to whose failings a genuine

poet like Judah could not close his eyes. He bridges this gap—which appears clearly in his work for the first time in the history of the Galut idea—by basing his faith on the meaning of Jewish history. For Judah ha-Levi, the Jewish nation is the only true, the only really living nation, because it has preserved unchanged in its people, throughout the whole of human history, that prophetic soul which God granted to the first man. Through its close tie with the *Shekhinah,* through inner freedom gained by its closeness to God, Israel enjoys the true meaning of life. The other nations are "dead" nations, seeking in vain, through their religious institutions, to imitate the tradition of the one nation that truly lives. The Hebrew language, too, is the original language of humanity, the only living language. The Jewish people and its culture owe their origin and their survival not to a natural development but to a spiritual principle, the will of the Creator. Judah knew the Arabic schools of history, and he was acquainted with the Arabic doctrine of the growth and decline of nations—through increase or decrease in numbers, through political strength or weakness, through separation and union of the individual parts of a nation. Like many of his Jewish contemporaries, he was not afraid occasionally to apply naturalistic historical theories to the history of the Jews. All knowledge and all art originated with the Jews and was transmitted to the other nations—Judah knew this from the ancient apologetics. But the political decline of the state carried with it a corresponding decline in Jewish culture. This is naturalistic doctrine, which otherwise cannot be applied to the history of the Jews. That history, for Judah, is raised above all causal laws. This is true of the old sacred history, and it is true also of the contemporary history of the Galut—so long as Israel is not,

because of its sins, delivered over to the world of natural law.

Judah ha-Levi is the first thinker after the political decline of the Jewish nation to give a full theoretical consideration to the problem of the Galut. And the problem required a new consideration, for the preceding centuries had witnessed an essential alteration in the political picture of the world. A broadened historical experience now offers a new argument for the truth of the Jewish faith: All the peoples of antiquity save the Jews have perished. The Jewish nation, "poor in substance but strong in form," still exists, despite the diminution of its physical strength; for it is sustained by God. But the longer the Galut continues, the more it demands a full justification. For it is not to be denied that the Jews in exile, no longer receiving the full strength of divine influence, are like a dismembered corpse—in which, indeed, some of the warmth of life still persists.

Judah finds consolation in ways of thinking that already exist scattered through the Jewish tradition. As once the Temple was the place of expiation for all humanity, the very heart of humanity, so in the Galut the Jewish people itself is the heart of humanity. The Jewish people is the servant of God, who suffers for the whole world and atones for the world's sins, according to Isaiah, or, as certain contemporaries of Judah, basing their faith on an older tradition, believed, it is the people of God which prays for the peace of a world under whose yoke it suffers (Jer. 29). To suffer humbly and be patient is the mission of the Jews in the Galut. The monastic orders of other religions have fulfilled this task only incompletely. All peoples pride themselves on their patient sufferers, but in reality they strive only to realize the ideal of the warrior, and see

the only measure of a nation's worth in outward political success. In reality, it is the lowly and unhappy condition of the Jews that is the strongest testimony to their historical mission.

Judah ha-Levi also revives, in a form rendered more profound by historical experience and an acquaintance with the comparative theology of the Arabs, the idea put forward in the old apologetics: that the Galut serves the purpose of disseminating the true faith. Christianity and Islam owe their births to the slow ripening of the seed sown by the Jews, and these two religious communities also prepare, in their own fashion, for the time of the Messiah. Thus these religions were assigned, for the present, a position in history that other nations refused to grant to the Jews. Christians and Mohammedans seem almost to have taken over the role of the *gerim* in the ancient conception of the Galut. The quiet working of the Jewish spirit is illustrated through the mystery of the seed of grain, which must seem to die and dissolve in order that it may assimilate the matter of its surroundings and incorporate it, on a higher level, into its own essence. And this is also the ancient symbol of the resurrection that is assured to the Jewish nation, as it is assured to the single individual.

Thus Galut and redemption are not conditions that gradually develop, come together, and intermingle in the course of historical processes. The Galut is the destruction of an ideal situation that must be re-established. For Judah ha-Levi, the national-religious guarantees of the past are real and effective pledges that will be redeemed in full. Nation, land, and Torah stand in a necessary relationship, half natural and half supernatural, which must be restored in its entirety. But Judah does not permit his hopes for the future to lead

him into romantic, apocalyptic dreams; he undertakes his memorable journey to Palestine in order by his own example to teach his contemporaries and all who come after him that redemption may be won only by a real and active longing for reunion with God in Palestine—that man himself must create the conditions that will lead to redemption.

Slowly at first, separating himself little by little from the pleasures of life, Judah came at last, through a penitent acceptance of the abasement of the Galut, to the final expression of his messianic conviction. He expressed the concrete experience of his time in terms always new and fresh; he lived through the greatest revolution in the history of the Jews, and he described their situation clearly and profoundly. "They tremble under their yoke, they wander like Cain, traversing the ends of the earth to go from one emptiness to another." "The son of the servant-maid [Ishmael] pursues us with his hate; we turn pleading to Esau, and he tears us like a wild beast." Ultimately, what lifts the poet above the horrors of his time is not only the strength of inner religious liberation, but also a historical vision that sheds light over the events of all times. More clearly, perhaps, than any Jew of later times, Judah understood the opposition between the historical principle of Judaism and the historical principle of the other nations—between the close relationship of the Jews to God, which raised them above all causal laws, and the power politics of the others. But this consciousness led him also beyond the practical politics of his Jewish friends. In those days Jewish politicians in Spain attempted, after the collapse of Arabic culture, to employ the means of practical politics in dealing with the Christian conquerors coming from the north, in order to obtain new places of refuge for the Jews

fleeing from the south. And that same poet who seems sometimes so sympathetic to such policies, and who on his trip to Palestine could still write in praise of the power of the Egyptian *Nagid* (chief of the Jews in Egypt), uncompromisingly rejects this sort of Galut politics. "Up! This is not your rest!" he cries to the false "redeemers." And to those who tried, almost in the terms of the early Christians, to belittle Palestine and settle themselves comfortably in the Galut, he says, "Have we in the East or in the West a place on which to rest our hope?"

This trust in Palestine as the "safe refuge" is of tremendous spiritual strength. No Jew before Judah ha-Levi expressed his homesickness with so deep a bitterness and from so profound a historical vision, and the whole world can show hardly anything comparable to his words. This is not simply because of the individual greatness of the poet, but also because of the unique situation of the Jewish people in the Galut, a situation here seen at its turning point. Whoever traces the path that the Jewish spirit traversed from the 126th and 137th Psalms until Judah ha-Levi's "Ode to Zion" must recognize that longing could go no further on earth. If there is a new note in Judah ha-Levi's longing for Zion, it comes from the events of his youth, when the last traces of the ancient Jewish settlements in Palestine were destroyed. With this, the Galut concept of the ancient Diaspora finally disappears. The Jew of the Hellenistic Diaspora had his "fatherland" in the country in which he was born and grew up, but his "motherland" was the holy city-state of the Temple. For the medieval Jew, the Galut was no home at all, and the "abode of peace" was the naked desert, stripped of its Jews, over which the nations of Europe and Asia quarreled in the name of religion, "as the jackals quarrel

over the lion's corpse," while only the Jew came to this land as a truly humble and loving pilgrim. Yet Zion was the center and heart of the Diaspora, and from north and south and east and west all those who languished in servitude looked to Zion. Palestine was the center and heart of the Diaspora even though the Temple was gone and hardly a Jew remained. It was no "spiritual center"; nor was it for the Jew, as it was for the Christian and the Mohammedan, only the land of a past revelation, endowed in consequence with a miraculous power of redemption; nor was it merely the Holy Land of tradition and dogma—this desert was home and mother earth for the Jewish people.

CHAPTER VI

RABBI MOSHE BEN MAIMON

A true national poet, Judah ha-Levi gave his people no new interpretation of its destiny; rather, he gave the historical tradition and folk consciousness of his people the highest expression that the medieval world allowed, and his formulation held fast for the generations that followed him. Only one man had anything essential to add—Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon (1135-1204).

Like Judah ha-Levi, Moshe ben Maimon shows tendencies toward a naturalistic and evolutionary conception of history. Especially noteworthy is his statement that the Jews' preoccupation with astrology caused the downfall of the Jewish state, because this pseudo-science diverted their minds from military skills and foreign conquests. It is the influence of Arabic political science and philosophies of civilization that operated at this point—as it later operated in the Renaissance—to introduce alien elements into the Jewish theory of history, without the writer being aware of any inconsistency. For in its larger pattern the historical thought of Moshe ben Maimon is traditional and religious, not empirical and scientific. Basically, he holds fast to the old conviction that the history of Israel is raised above all empirical causation. For Israel there can be no "fate" conceived in astrological terms; Israel's survival or fall depends not on natural causes but on the people's submission to God or revolt against him. Jewish history is still the history of the trial of God's people, whose progressive stages Moshe ben Maimon clearly

outlines in his "Epistle to Yemen." First the enemy tried to annihilate the Jewish nation by sheer force, then to alienate the Jews from God through worldly knowledge. Finally the religions of Christendom and Islam arose, set up as rivals to Judaism, and fought the Jews simultaneously with the weapons of force and of the spirit, believing that by taking over certain elements of Judaism they could shake the faith of the Jews. In these terms, history retains the character of a progressive process of redemption, and the outward increase of suffering in the age of the Crusades becomes in consequence a sign of approaching salvation. This explains the growing desperation that seized hold of all the Jews of the world, and the appearance of the false Messiahs. At the same time, history is also a process of the dissemination of the true faith; for Moshe ben Maimon, as for Judah ha-Levi, Christianity and Islam serve to prepare the way for the true Messiah. In Moshe ben Maimon a large and humane mind combines with a strong faith in the historical mission of the Jewish people. To the proselyte, Obadiah, he writes that there are no distinctions between the sons of Jacob and those who, out of sincere conviction, attach themselves to the enslaved and outcast nation as sons of Abraham, the father of the *gerim.* But if a Jew does not stand fast in the time of persecution—so one talmudic authority has it—that is proof that the ancestors of this doubting and faithless one "did not stand on Mount Sinai." For the faith of Israel is attested through the Jewish nation itself, which in all its members and for all time was made a partaker of the revelation of Sinai. "*Our* eyes saw it, and no strangers' eyes; *our* ears heard it, and no others'." Thus no Jew can ever be alienated from his faith, either by external force or by his own will. "For the Torah can never be separated from any

of the seed of Jacob, neither from him nor from his sons nor from his descendants, neither willingly nor unwillingly." For Moshe ben Maimon, the survival of the Jewish people is as sure as the eternity of the Torah —the ideal and source of all knowledge for all ages—as sure as the establishment of the messianic kingdom, and the rebuilding of the Temple in its ancient glory. Moshe ben Maimon shared completely the real messianic hopes that the experiences of the age awakened in his people. He himself passed on a tradition according to which the gift of prophecy was to return to Israel in the year 1216. And when he holds fast to the supreme authority of the learned men of Palestine and to their vital function in matters of calendar determination, and when he demonstrates that the revival of ordination in Palestine is a necessary precondition to the redemption, in so doing he displays very clearly the prime concern of the religious-national politician, whose eschatological hopes are bound up with the Jewish center in Palestine. This constant concern also shows itself in his inclusion of the Messiah doctrine in the Jewish articles of faith, which he drew up for the first time. In choosing these articles of faith of Jewish doctrine he based his choice entirely on the needs of the time, and gave a very special place to the doctrine of the Messiah, not because he was making any effort to conform to the views of the people, nor because he was constrained, but because in his eyes the Messiah doctrine was basic to the Jewish faith and to the historical existence of the Jewish people, which had to be defended against any attack. Again, if he insisted that the true Messiah could be recognized only by outward signs—the political, military, national consequences that were to follow his appearance—he did so simply to erect a wall against spiritualizing tendencies, which

were encouraged among the Jews by internal and external influences, and against the fantasies of the false prophets, which, if allowed to spread, could not in the end fail to shake the people's faith. He fought against the aberrations of a mystical faith to which he himself essentially belonged. His own faith was genuine and more strongly determined by the historical tradition of Judaism than by any external philosophical influence. His "rationalism" did not shake the national and political foundations of the Jewish tradition; rather, it strengthened them. Such a position was, after all, only natural for a man living in Egypt, so close to the most critical struggles that raged around the Holy Land. For this man, the strongest personality of medieval Jewry, the Galut as such is even less of a problem than it was for Judah ha-Levi.

CHAPTER VII

THE LATER MIDDLE AGES

From the twelfth century on, the problem of the Galut becomes more complicated. The external conditions under which Judaism subsisted gave rise to doubts that did not grow out of Judaism itself but were a direct result of the objective relations between Jewry and Christendom. The debate between Israel and the nations was no longer confined to the question of whether Israel was the chosen people and its Torah the eternal law, destined "one day"—that is, soon—to rule the world; criticism now centered upon the outer forms of the life led by the Jewish people in the Galut.

The generation after the First Crusade most clearly perceived the true source of the political and moral problem and its particular severity. Peter Abelard (died 1142), in his "Colloquy among a Philosopher, a Jew, and a Christian," puts the most striking words into the mouth of the Jew: that one makes a devil of God if one believes that the steadfastness of the Jews in their unending sufferings can remain unrewarded; and that no other nation has ever suffered so much for the sake of God. Scattered among all the nations of the world, without kings or princes, the Jews suffer under a heavy burden of taxes, as though each day they had to repurchase the right to live. It is felt to be a thing pleasing to God to mistreat the Jews, for the Christians can explain so heavy a servitude only as a sign of God's hatred. The lives of the Jews are entrusted into the hands of their fiercest enemies. Even in their sleep they are beset with dreams of horror. They have a safe ref-

uge nowhere but in heaven. If a Jew wishes to travel from one place to the next, he must spend large sums to buy the protection of Christian princes who in reality wish for his death, so as to be able to seize the property he will leave behind. The Jew can possess no fields or vineyards, for there is no one to protect his right of ownership. So he is forced into moneylending, and this makes the Christian hate him more.

The relations of the Jews to the other nations were determined, in accordance with talmudic tradition, by a consciousness of the Jews' servitude to Rome and her successors, and by the need to remain undefiled by the influences of "idolators"—until the late Middle Ages the Jews still felt that the Christians were idolators. On the political level the Jews recognized the obligation of loyalty to their rulers so long as the ruling power was exercised according to fixed principles and was not the mere arbitrary will of the ruler. In economic and social matters there was only one recognized religious doctrine: that which enjoined the greatest possible renunciation of the things of this world. Certainly there was no principle that made it a virtue to overreach the Christians in commercial dealings; at most there were simply the unhealthy psychological consequences of an unnatural political situation: the ordinary Jew might be willing to take advantage of a sentence that appears once in the Talmud, according to which a Jew is permitted to profit from the errors of a non-Jew. But such practices were only to be expected in commercial and other intercourse among members of different faiths. Interest-taking was, according to the doctrine that originated with the Jews, a mortal sin; but Christian as well as Jewish interpretation of the doctrine permitted the collection of interest from members of other faiths. So the Jews were led into this

unpopular business by both internal and external factors. In ancient and medieval ethics, Christian no less than Jewish, certain unethical practices were permissible if employed against unbelievers; if, in general, one was supposed to avoid such practices, it was only "that the name of God be not profaned" (Lev. 18:21). These vestiges of "in-group morality" could be done away with through the peaceful development of human relations and through philosophical enlightenment. Among the Jews, the strict morality of the pietists was a strong influence in the right direction. Among the Christians, on the other hand, the most pious were also the greatest haters of Jews, and the command to love one's neighbor had no meaning for them when the neighbor was of another faith. The official Christian Church taught, indeed, that it was not permissible to kill Jews; but it also taught that it was the duty of a Christian to force the Jews to accept conversion by external pressure, and popular preachers from the thirteenth century on repeatedly preached open war against Jewry. The dominant Christian doctrine equated Judaism with the devil; this encouraged the development of hate-fantasies that had no counterpart whatever in Jewish doctrine and life. In the Church Fathers one reads of the same accusation of ritual murder that was raised against the Christians in the first centuries of Christianity; English monks of the twelfth century copied out the relevant passages and simply applied them to the Jews. The lie grew more fantastic from generation to generation, and naturally there were always new "cases" embodying the particular version of ritual murder current at the time. The Jews gave vent to their feelings of hatred in prayers for vengeance and in apocalyptic visions. They used every means at their disposal to punish apostates and

those who betrayed their fellow Jews. But they raised no hand against the Christians. "Vengeance is Mine and recompense" (Deut. 32:35).

In the thirteenth century, the fight against the neo-Manicheans and the Averroists brought the attention of the growing Scholasticism to the Talmud. Except for isolated references by the earlier Christian theologians, it was chiefly the Karaites[1] and the philosophers among the Jews who had earlier attacked the half-mythical conceptual world of the Aggadah and the argumentation and ethics of the Halakhah, neither of which always lived up to the requirements of a philosophically trained logic and a less naive morality. The champions of the Christian Church now explored the material of this earlier, inner-Jewish criticism, and abstracted from it the isolated texts that served their purposes. Above all, they were interested in making it appear that the Talmud was an arsenal of hatred against Christianity, and this interest forced them into serious abuses of the material. Thus, the Karaites had, from the standpoint of a rigorous morality, attacked the laxer rabbinical doctrine that permitted the dissolution of an oath; the Karaites criticized the Kol Nidre prayer in particular. The Christians made use of this dispute to create a supposed Jewish "principle" according to which no oath made to a Christian was binding. Such distortions led the popes at various times to order the Talmud burned. On the other hand, Christian scholars believed they could find traces of Christian doctrine in the proscribed *aggadot*, and they made every effort to force the Jews to accept their new interpretation.

Thus, out of intolerable tension and conflict there gradually developed the elements of a "Jewish ques-

[1] A Jewish sect that did not recognize the Oral Tradition.

tion" in the modern sense. The conditions of the medieval guild system could only sharpen the conflict. Within the state the Jews constituted a special national-religious body among the various orders, one that had its own political interests and felt itself to be in direct opposition to the religious faith of the majority. In addition, this group very often had prominent members who were in the service of the ruler and carried on the business of the state, who evoked the enmity of the Christian groups because they upheld absolutist fiscal policies, or catered to the whims of the ruler, or exploited their positions for their own advantage. Certain narrow lines of communication bridged the gap between Jews and Christians: the general human intercourse that was possible in urban or court circles; the common interests of scholars; the beginnings of religious tolerance and of patriotism. But these weak threads were severed in times of trouble; no cure could be expected from this type of interrelationship.

But if the "Jewish question" was not to be solved by tolerance, neither could hate provide any final solution. Wherever during the later Middle Ages we find an antisemitic economic program, it consists of an effort to force the Jews into the lowest and most dishonorable occupations. This is the program that the mendicant friars created in the thirteenth century, and it is the same program that the German reformers (Luther and his circle) later took up. Shortly before the expulsion of the Jews from England in 1290, it was proposed that the Jews of that land be forced to give up moneylending and be granted land holdings in compensation; in Spain, similar decrees were drafted rather frequently. But such laws were never actually carried out. In the Middle Ages no one had the power to initiate any basic reforms, and no one had the neces-

sary insight into the true nature of social evils. The Jewish question of the Middle Ages was a religious problem that was fundamentally at the same time the political problem of the existence of the Jewish nation; this problem produced as its consequence social evils that the conditions of the time rendered inevitable.

One radical solution was baptism. But if this was to put an end to the tension, it was necessary not only that the change of faith be sincere, but also that all traces of Jewish feeling be obliterated for all generations, and this was seldom the case. Since peaceful means proved to be of little help, hatred broke forth in contrived atrocity-trials and bloody persecution. In the later Middle Ages, these were more and more determined by the social and economic accompaniments of the Jewish problem; but this fact must not obscure the essentially religious character of the conflict. Baptism always stopped persecution.

The last and most radical solution that remained was the expulsion of the Jews, which the early medieval Church employed primarily as a means of compelling the Jews to accept baptism—and not without success. Most of the Jews were in no position to emigrate and were consequently forced into outward conformity. Even the last expulsions of the Middle Ages were aimed basically at converting the Jews and not at forcing them to emigrate. But the number of Jews who chose to retain their faith increased as the means of travel and transportation developed, and the policy of expulsion thus accomplished a political and social task that was not originally its purpose: the purging of an unwanted element of the population. Occasionally, expulsion was employed merely as a means of satisfying the greed of a ruler.

Neither did the Jews, on their side, have any "constructive" program of reform to offer. Single points of friction in the relations of Jews and Christians could be eliminated within the Jewish community by *takkanot* (community ordinances), just as Christian legislation could make relations smoother. But this made no essential difference. The knot of the Jewish problem could not be cut from the inside, however it might be attempted from the outside. The Christians could demand the expulsion of the Jews; the Jews, after their expulsion, faced the same problems in another country. Since any radical alteration of the situation lay in God's hands alone, it was necessary to accept the situation more or less as it was. No understanding with the enemy was possible. The only way to such an understanding was that which still remains the only way today: an open clarification of the historical limitations of the situation, and an alleviation of its difficulties by the exercise of a spirit of humanity. But during the Middle Ages there were hindrances in this path that are still to be surmounted today. The Christians had no desire to understand the Jews, and the Jews naturally did not know how to make themselves understandable in a historical sense. In addition, there were external considerations that kept them silent. It was necessary for them to defend their temporal situation together with the whole religious-national tradition that had brought this situation about. The surrender of a single stone would endanger the whole structure; any admission of weakness was impossible, for it could only put a weapon into the hands of the enemy. At the same time, there could be no fundamental criticism from within, for in the medieval mind that could lead only to weakness and defection, not to reform. The tools of logical and historical criticism were used

widely enough against the enemy, but not in one's own camp: so far as possible, one put off any theoretical attacks from outside with a "straw," which meant that one had no real faith in the weight of one's own arguments. But the conviction of the truth of one's own position was so strong that there seemed no need to argue about individual questions with those who did not understand. This was valid enough for the basic question of religious election, but it could also shut the door to discussion of all the inevitable social questions.

For all that, the Jews could not neglect the social problems of the time, for, independently of relations with the non-Jews, these problems were felt within the Jewish camp. Wherever Jewish communities developed to any considerable extent, they fell sick with the diseases characteristic of the cities of the *ancien régime*. The Jewish communities split into classes and cliques; the upper classes exploited the lower classes; the city communities tyrannized over the village communities. The uneasy situation of the Jews, who were always on the defensive, resulted in the terrible trials of informers. Rich families separated themselves from the community; in Spain and Italy especially, they gave their children a non-religious education and followed a worldly course of life. Even during the Middle Ages, Jewish voices were raised against these conditions, calling upon the Jews to leave the cities and go to the country, and exhorting the rich Jews to have their children taught honest handicrafts. Countless moral testaments and sentimental tracts called for a life of simplicity and humility, a life of atonement, asceticism, and penitence. These exhortations originated with the poor Ashkenazic Jews, who served as the models of piety; the Ashkenazim carried their exhortations with them to the South, and thence they

were spread over Europe by scattered groups of mystics. To the truly pious, all worldly life and all business dealings with non-Jews seemed undesirable; most of all, they hated the Jewish physicians and tax farmers who served in the courts of the rulers and in foreign states.

If words were of no avail, the great persecutions followed: far greater efforts were made to give the persecutions a religious and moral significance than to examine their political and social origins. Massacres and disputations induced the highest classes of the Jewish community to accept outward conversion to Christianity, leaving the little people as the only defenders of the religious tradition. The consequences of so violent a reform can be recognized most clearly in those regions where external pressures did not permit the growth of large Jewish communities and a broad development of economic and social relations. In those regions, the only occupation left to the Jews was moneylending, which produced its two social types: the ascetic whose primary interest is in "learning," and the more ambitious financier, who reaches out toward the world. It might appear that the inner-Jewish ascetic ideal was saved by this development, but the difficulties of intercourse with the larger world remained unchanged.

The Ashkenazic Jews seemed to be the purest embodiment of the people of God. With them the old national system of ritual, law, and learning remained alive, nourished by the simple and naive books of customs that, no less than the talmudic tradition itself, belonged to the whole nation. Communities with a strong social structure became more and more rare, and after 1350 they disappeared altogether. There remained only simple groupings of small or large money-

lenders, who devoted themselves primarily to the study of the Talmud, acting as custodians of the legacy of their fathers. Law and custom were maintained primarily through a scrupulous public and private system of "composition penalties," [2] apparently developed under some degree of Christian-Germanic influence.

For that generation no greater aim seemed to remain than to prepare for the hour of martyrdom. Singing and dancing, entire communities exultantly entered the pits prepared for their burning. In elegies that ring like hammer blows, the martyrs are praised individually and by name. With the period of the Black Death (around 1350) these poems disappear, as the hymns had disappeared before them, in which the choir of Heaven and the community of God's people on earth alternated in singing the praises of the Almighty. Judah ha-Levi's "Ode to Zion" has its last great echo in a poem written by Rabbi Meir of Rothenburg (*ca.* 1220-1293) to the burnt Talmud, the burnt Torah around whose ashes her mourning sons assemble. The Torah now took the place of the blessed homeland. Rabbi Meir is one of the few Ashkenazic Jews of later times known to have undertaken the leadership of a large-scale emigration to Palestine. Because of the dangers of the journey and the unhappy state of affairs in the Holy Land, emigration to Palestine was no longer recognized as a duty; a north-Spanish Kabbalist under Ashkenazic influence could declare that the Jews of his time were relieved of the obligation to live in the Holy Land.

The Spanish and Italian Jews long before this had lost the ability to create a religious poetry capable of expressing the whole community. A naive and direct

[2] Payments in lieu of penitential austerities.

interpretation of the national destiny becomes ever more rare. Philosophical exegesis, when it does not lead to skepticism, occupies itself with the problem of the relationship between faith and knowledge, between Jewish and secular education, between Jewish and Christian doctrine. The contrast between the Jewish world and the larger world is reduced to scholastic problems of dogma. Jewish philosophy is helpless when it approaches the problems of political and historical life, while at the same time many Jews occupy the most prominent positions in the political and economic life of their countries. Here the gap between the religious-historical vocation and real life is widest.

Mysticism took over the task of reinforcing the structure of tradition that had been shaken by rationalism and Christian polemic. The disputed *aggadot* and *halakhot* were reinterpreted in mystical terms, and the whole life of the Galut took on the character of a secret pattern in a cosmic process of exile and redemption. The whole wonder-world of tradition took on a new and magical light that seemed to shed a halo even over the horrors of the Galut. But the body of the nation, thus revivified, now almost resembled those unearthly bodies that the dead were supposed to assume after the Last Judgment and the Resurrection. The primitive, naive understanding of historical life, rooted in the consciousness of the people, was hidden under the speculations of small circles—though it must be granted that these circles rapidly broadened their influence. The gap between faith and the realities of life was widened by Kabbalah no less than by philosophy. Kabbalah produced new powers that made for the conservation of the traditional patterns of Jewish existence and for their inner vindication, and thereby helped to prevent a premature collapse. Perhaps it prevented at

the same time the restoration to health of other forces closer allied to life. In its practical effects, Kabbalah strengthened only the ascetic tendencies of Galut life and the insecurity of the Jews in the face of those real conditions.

The new coloration in the historical world-picture is already visible in the first full and authoritative representative of the new orientation. Rabbi Moshe ben Nahman (*ca.* 1195-1270) affirms the indivisibility of people, land, and Torah in words that were probably fifteen hundred years old. This doctrine, however, that had grown naturally out of the national consciousness takes on a magical character which goes beyond certain such indications in Judah ha-Levi. Reviving an ancient astrological doctrine, Moshe ben Nahman explains how the lands of the earth were divided among the nations and their "princes," and how Israel and its land was given a special place in the plan of earth and heaven. The Jews are spewed forth from the Holy Land whenever their conduct pollutes it; the land will accept no ruler who does not know "the law of the God of the land"; in foreign lands, the Jews cannot fulfil the law completely and are delivered over to the power of foreigners. But the commandment to take possession of Palestine and not to surrender it to other nations or to desolation is among the commandments that remain in force even in exile. Moshe ben Nahman himself, by his emigration to Palestine, gave the signal for a new decampment.

By his activity in the production of apologetics against the Christians, Moshe ben Nahman also helped to give a new firmness to the Messiah doctrine. Following in the path of Abraham bar Hiyya (*ca.* 1065-1136), he wrote a tractate on redemption in which he tried to demonstrate that redemption had not yet come, and

to calculate the time of the Messiah's coming. But in the disputation held before the King of Aragon, he declared that even greater than the rewards to be expected in the time of the Messiah would be the reward for the sufferings of the Galut, where the Jew, undergoing mistreatment, servitude, and dishonor at the hands of the nations, made an offering to God of his own body. In another place he even takes under consideration an interpretation according to which the sinfulness of past and living generations has led God to establish the Galut as an unending earthly condition; all their reward would then be granted in the other world. But he holds fast to the hope of redemption, because it is promised in the Bible and because the real fulfilment of the laws—and thus real bliss—will be possible only in the time of the Messiah. Only then will there be an end to doubt. Moreover, it is in the nature of man to desire to see the victory of truth on earth; that victory is also required for the sanctification of the name of God.

Later, out of consideration for the requirements of apologetics, an attempt was even made to reduce the Messiah doctrine to the rank of a secondary article of faith. There is ample ground for believing that the leading personalities among the Jews, who outwardly supported such interpretations for the sake of maintaining Judaism, in reality thought quite differently. But it is noteworthy that such views could be expressed openly. And if the poor began to doubt redemption, the well-to-do began to mock at it: Immanuel of Rome (*ca.* 1300) addresses the Messiah in a poem, telling him that he must come riding on a neighing horse to liberate the people; if he insists on coming on the promised modest little ass, he'd much better stay away. In the same generation, a Spanish apostate attributes to the

Jews the statement that they do not find their difficulties in the Galut very serious: even under a Jewish king, they would still have to pay taxes; they would have to work themselves, instead of living as parasites on the Gentiles, and, in addition, would have to obey all those religious laws that they are not required to obey in the Diaspora. For this reason, he goes on to say, the wiser Jews curse the Pope and the Christian princes for not oppressing the Jews severely enough to force the indifferent back to their faith.

CHAPTER VIII

THE TURN OF THE MIDDLE AGES

Like the age of the Crusades, the turn of the Middle Ages was a time marked by a complete alteration in the external situation of the Jews. The Jews were driven from Spain, Portugal, south Italy, and many of the cities and territories of Germany. At the same time, the war between Christendom and the Turks awakened eschatological hopes, and Turkey offered new places of refuge to the emigrant Jews—particularly, Turkey offered new possibilities for settlement in Palestine. For the Jews of Europe, the end of the Middle Ages was the termination of a period of persecution that had begun with the development of Scholasticism and the appearance of the mendicant orders in the thirteenth century. The mendicant friars spread an ascetic, theocratic, and partly eschatological version of Christianity, especially among the populations of the cities, and they were able to make use of the accumulated causes for social friction in the cities for their fight against the Jews. In certain areas and certain generations, the rural population was won over as well. Ascetic tendencies and, consequently, hatred of the Jews won a decisive influence over the policies of European rulers. These forces produced the expulsion edicts of France, England, and southern Italy, the persecutions in Germany and Spain in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and the unspeakable disorders of the fifteenth century.

We find few direct expressions of the inner reaction of the Jews to the experiences of the time, and most such expressions come out of Spain. There the persecu-

tions of 1391 delivered most of the Jewish communities to the sword or to forced baptism, and the years that followed brought the most dreadful religious intolerance. The disputation of Tortosa, which continued for almost two years (1413-1414) and was accompanied by acts of violence and the most severe moral pressure, brought many more Jews to the baptismal font, both from the ranks of the intelligentsia and from the masses. Families were divided against themselves in this battle of faiths. Here the tragedy of the Galut produced its most extreme practical and theoretical consequences. The widespread desertions from the Jewish ranks were in part the result of a typical medieval response to the events of history: catastrophes were signs from heaven—one could read God's will in their course. God had forsaken his people, and it was his will that they should bow to destiny and accept baptism. And there were many who, though they refused to take this final step, fell into the depths of despair until they became "like slaves." "We have lost our hope for freedom," writes Joseph Albo (after 1415), "and we seek only to survive in the Galut, with our poverty and our degradation."

At the same time, the old messianic calculations began to reappear. And for the first time since the Crusades there was a considerable movement for emigration to Palestine, which after the middle of the fifteenth century took on an increasingly massive character. In the circles around Hasdai Crescas (d. 1412) the idea seems to have arisen even in those days that the Jews might establish a community in Palestine under the jurisdiction of the Egyptian Mamelukes, modeled after the second Jewish state. But the primary labors of this great man and his friends were devoted to the restoration of the Jewish communities in Spain. The

sources of the catastrophe of 1391 were sought exclusively in internal failings: the devastating religious rationalism, the lack of inner strength, the deterioration of community feeling, mutual hatred, the narrowness of political leadership. Educational efforts were now devoted mainly to religious polemic.

On the Christian side, there developed at this time the most thoroughgoing reform program that the Middle Ages produced. The early tendencies of the Church united with the long-standing desire of the estates to ruin the Jews economically, to destroy their communal autonomy, and completely to reduce the Jews to the state of pariahs, forbidden all intercourse with the Christian community. This program was never fully carried out. After a short time, with the appearance of the *conversos* (*anusim*, new Christians, Marranos), the "Jewish question" assumed an entirely new complexion. The mass baptisms did not have the desired effect: for the most part, the baptized Jews remained the same men they had been before. Here for the first time we see the after-effects of the centuries-old bonds of political oppression and religious asceticism, bonds that still held after they had been externally removed. In many respects, the Marranos of that time resemble the Western European Jews of our own time. But the Jews who then sought to immerse themselves in the Christian community were driven by the fear of death or by acute physical pressures. With them, it was not a matter of the gradual obliteration of culture and social boundaries, as it is today, but rather a sudden and complete reversal of faith; and the inner cleavage in the mind of the baptized Jew was not caused by difficulties encountered in trying to "assimilate" himself, but by actual religious doubt. Certainly we cannot decide how much instinctive national feeling there was in the at-

tachment of the Marranos to the religion of their fathers. But for the first time in history there appeared large groups of men who could no longer be regarded as Jews in religious terms but who obviously manifested themselves as Jews in their whole habit of life, in their economic behavior, and in their tendency to live by themselves in separation from the Christians. As a result, the hatred toward the Marranos in Spain assumed the forms of real racial antisemitism. It seemed no longer a question of conviction or of general historical theories: The experiences of life now seemed to demonstrate that there was some ineradicable incompatibility between the two peoples, making it impossible for the Jews to mix with the Spaniards. In consequence, attempts were made to exclude the Jews not only from national and city councils but even from posts in the Church and membership in the congregations. Such proposals for the exclusion of the Jews were supported by the claim that Jews were not to be relied on in matters affecting the Christian faith, but eventually all arguments were reduced to the question of "purity of blood," and the Spaniards began to look into the pedigrees of families that were about to submerge completely into the Christian community. This was in direct contravention of Church doctrine; it was violently opposed by the orthodox, and was never accepted outside of the Iberian peninsula.

In Spain and Portugal the problem of the Marranos created an antisemitic literature that even in detail resembles its modern counterpart. This literature speaks of the assimilated Jew in these terms: He is nihilistic and libertine in matters of religion; he espouses that religion which brings in the most money; he plots to subvert and destroy the Christian community; he pollutes the pure Spanish blood; he lives as

a parasite in Spain and emigrates to Palestine with the money he has taken from Christians. Pamphlets disseminated at the time bear a close resemblance to the "Protocols of the Elders of Zion." A Spanish Franciscan wrote the monumental work of religious antisemitism, *Fortalitium fidei* ("Fortress of Faith"), which is the earliest example of an antisemitic "history," presenting a chronological account of the "atrocities" committed by the Jews and the "defeats" suffered by them. This book was first printed in Strassburg and Nuremberg in the seventies and eighties of the fifteenth century, and was not without influence on the German antisemitic movement of the age of the Reformation. One can hardly be surprised that modern antisemites have been glad to make use of this literature, which is known to them only to the most limited extent; in those days, as today, hate painted its object in the colors of grossest exaggeration. For the modern observer, however, the Jewish problem of fifteenth-century Spain indicates only the terrible inevitability of historical conflicts, which apparently are constantly renewed in new forms.

However, the Spanish antisemites of that epoch still thought of the Jewish question as a religious one: The politicians felt it to be their task to guard against the religious infection that came from the Jews, and thus to preserve the religious, not the racial purity of the Spanish people. After various half measures had been applied, the so-called Catholic sovereigns undertook to accomplish a final solution. In the course of twelve years, one step followed another until the Jews were entirely separated from the body of the Spanish people. Special Jewish quarters were established. The Jews were expelled from the provinces where they were most numerous. The Inquisition was organized anew; day

in, day out, in ceaseless activity the Inquisition burned new Christians entirely guiltless of civil and political crimes, guilty of no offense but "Judaizing." Whole Jewish communities were placed on trial for plotting the subversion of Christianity; trials on the charge of ritual murder were organized that employed the whole fantastic stock of medieval accusations against the Jews. All this, and finally the expulsion of 1492, was the work of the Franciscan and Dominican orders. It was carried out with the silent or open approval of the educated European world—at best, there were occasional expressions of halfhearted sympathy.

CHAPTER IX

ISAAC ABRAVANEL

The chronicles and autobiographical and eschatological writings of the time give us but little information about what went on in the hearts of the Jews in the course of these terrible and revolutionary experiences. The only Jewish figure of the time whose writings can offer any real satisfaction to the curiosity of a modern historian was Isaac Abravanel (1437-1508).

From 1483 on, Isaac Abravanel lived at the court of the Catholic sovereigns, and in 1492 he found himself, with his family, in the ranks of the exiles. He had a humanistic education and was better equipped than most to approach a political-historical expression of his ideas. In essence, however, he remained bound to medieval patterns of thought. He sought to clarify the questions that pressed upon him by writing voluminous biblical commentaries and messianological tractates. He collected the materials of medieval religions and philosophical tradition, but restored them to their original historical-eschatological foundation; in this he resembles the far greater Judah ha-Levi.

We may regard Isaac Abravanel as one of the central figures in the development of the historical ideas of Judaism. He had a decisive influence on the Jewish apologetics of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and is cited as a Jewish authority by the Christian theologians and political thinkers of that time; at the same time, modern Jewish scholars, characteristically, have paid no great attention to his work. In his method of comparing Jewish tradition and the humanistic-

Christian tradition, Abravanel anticipates all the trends of the Jewish humanism of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; he is the true founder of the science of Judaism. Abravanel and his followers see the problem of Judaism in exactly the same terms as those in which it is formulated in Hellenistic Jewish literature, except that the massive materials of talmudic and medieval tradition have been added, and the eschatological hopes aroused by the experiences of the time are no longer concealed, at least in the writings of Abravanel himself, but rather are passionately expressed and painstakingly demonstrated.

Abravanel's exegetical works, written in the course of the greatest vicissitudes of Jewish history, are based on a definite historical picture of the election and redemption of Israel. According to him, the first chapters of Genesis are an account of man's fall from an ideal state of nature, caused by the development of agriculture, handicrafts, and commerce, the establishment of private property, the founding of states, the division of a single humanity into different nations, and the appearance of artificial languages in place of the mother language, Hebrew. In the course of this descent from the ideal, only the Jewish people, the ancestor of all other nations, kept its original elevation. So long as the Jews wandered in the desert, they maintained themselves by dependence on the means provided by nature and God. In their own country they were permitted to make suitable use of the superfluous products of civilization.

The Torah is the ideal body of law. This old idea appears throughout Hellenistic and medieval apologetic writings, where it is demonstrated in full detail; but in Abravanel's writing it takes on a much more realistic significance by virtue of his historical-political

education and his experience as a practical man of the court. He draws extensively on the institutions of the states of the Iberian peninsula and the city-states of Italy for purposes of comparison. For him, the Mosaic law, with the rejection of monarchy and its attendant evils, comprises the best elements of a republican constitution under divine guidance. The Mosaic laws not only allow the fulfilment of human rights, but also broaden the area of human rights through the principle of divine mercy; and, in addition, they regulate the relations between God and man, which fall outside the framework of natural law. The value of worldly justice is given full recognition in the identity established here for the first time between natural law and the "Noahic" laws.[1] Thus Abravanel adds the enrichment of historical experience to ideas which, if common enough in the medieval literature of Judaism, were never before raised above the ordinary. In Abravanel's writing, the hope of a speedy fulfilment of the ideal world is given a realistic backing.

Abravanel analyzes the biblical story with all the tools of humanistic learning. This section of his historical work was naturally the most important in his eyes, but we can concern ourselves with it only to the extent that it illuminates his treatment of the history of the Galut. Lacking an authentic documentary basis like the Bible, Abravanel, despite his broad—though always superficial—historical learning, is almost as helpless before the problem of the Galut as the rest of medieval Jewry. In general, his account of the Second Temple follows Yosippon; it has the character of an episode in the history of the Jews. And after the destruction of the Second Temple, Jewish history seems

[1] The seven basic moral principles through whose observance all men (all the descendants of Noah) could obtain salvation.

no longer to have any real foundation. The deeper source of this weakness in historical thinking is clearer in Abravanel than in his predecessors: the causes that operate in Jewish history are different from the causes that operate in the history of the nations.

Abravanel approaches the beauties of Greece and the heroic greatness of Rome with all the enthusiasm of the humanist—an enthusiasm, to be sure, that never affects his bitter hatred toward the Rome of the popes. And he uses the causal and aesthetic standards of humanism to judge the constitutions and the literatures of Greece and Rome, just as he uses these standards to judge the states and constitutions of his own time. The natural law that determines the history of the nations has in itself greatness and beauty. This same natural law can be observed to operate even in the history of the first Jewish state, though modified by divine mercy. But, with the Galut, Jewish history finally leaves the framework of natural law, and the spiritual power of Judaism lives on after the gradual death of its physical power. This fact is unique in the history of the nations. Troy was annihilated, but the Jews have survived the destruction of their fatherland.

Nevertheless, the historical mission of the Jews is tied in with the natural attributes of the nation. Abravanel's Jewish national consciousness is nourished not only by the thought of the Midrash and *Kuzari;* it takes on a new coloring from the humanistic learning and the experiences of his own time. For Abravanel, the special position of the Jewish nation is already clearly fixed in the first two books of the Pentateuch. The children of Israel were not scattered groups eventually united by religion; rather, they were brought forth by God's choice from a *single* holy seed. The Jewish religion differs from the Christian and Mohamme-

dan religions in the fact that it does not embrace different peoples and states, but, on the contrary, has guarded the chosen people against mingling with alien nations. Here for the first time the significance of the idea of the nation in Jewish history is set forth in the light of modern realism.

The influence of the Marrano problem, which Abravanel deals with explicitly in other parts of his work, is unmistakable. The Jews are bound by their descent, even against their will. Those Jews are deceived who think they can merge in the nations, take part in their causally determined fortunes, and escape the supracausal intervention of God. "They tell themselves that they may become like the nations of the earth and with them bow down to wood and stone, but this will not happen; with a strong hand and an outstretched arm, and with terrible anger I shall rule over you." " 'You are Mine, and by necessity you shall be Mine.' " says Abravanel to the Marranos. No one of God's flock can merge with another people. Time cannot change him; he or those who come after him must return to the flock. This nation-theology is in no way inconsistent with the complete acceptance of proselytes, as it never is in older Judaism: those who join themselves to Israel in the time of its suffering will have an equal share in the messianic distribution of the land of Palestine.

Once Abravanel has thus set forth the special position of the Jews in history, his eschatological contemplations leave little room for a realistic examination of the conditions of life in the Galut. In the few places where Abravanel concerns himself with the real attacks on Jewish life in his time, he falls into the patterns of the current apologetic. He is not at all interested in any internal criticism. For this cultivated humanist and practical statesman, the Jewish problem

remains entirely within the great framework of election and redemption. The election conditions the Galut, and the Galut involves certain social evils that will disappear automatically with the imminent redemption. One characteristic of the Galut, for example, is that the Jews live only by commerce and handicrafts; redemption will bring about a return to the natural life of agriculture. For Abravanel, as for the Ashkenazim of his time, the abnormal economic life of the Jews appears as a kind of necessary precondition for the practice of asceticism and devotion to the study of the Torah. He entirely ignores the fact that he himself, living in Spain and Portugal, grew up under much broader and healthier conditions. He even finds a certain providential meaning in the Jews' engagement in commerce: this activity wins for the Jews the good will of the nations, which need their wares, and provides the basis for the Jews' existence in the Galut. The legal status of the Jews is also providential: they are slaves of the rulers, but not private slaves, and thus they are secure from destruction. And by God's mercy the Jews have been dispersed mainly among the monotheistic peoples, who must accord them some degree of consideration. He sees no need for any further discussion of all this: the Galut is coming to an end.

Like Judah ha-Levi and Moshe ben Maimon, Abravanel shows certain tendencies towards an evolutionary-historical view of the Galut. These tendencies also continue the line of the older eschatological tradition. If the Midrash distinguishes three periods of world history and speaks of the last two thousand years as the "time of the Messiah," what is meant, according to Abravanel, is the time of mankind's longing for the Messiah. The appearance of Jesus, of Ben Koziba, of Mohammed, and of the false Jewish Messiahs of later

centuries is evidence of the correctness of this interpretation. It is "as if the nature of the time brought men's minds to long for the coming of the Messiah. And though all this may be attributed to false imaginings, doubtless there was a higher decree to send the Messiah during these last two thousand years, and the words of God were heard, so that men ate of unripe fruit and ran foolishly ahead of the time. And this came from God to announce the coming Messiah-King to all the world, so that men's mouths and hearts might be full of him, even if by error and on delusive ways." An analogous significance is attributed to the growth of heretical movements among the Christians at the end of the Middle Ages. Nor does Abravanel neglect to point out that one of the subsidiary purposes of the dispersion of the Jews is the direct and indirect dissemination of Jewish religious ideas among the nations. But he never permits himself to interpret the "time of the Messiah" as merely a vague picture of some gradual development. Abravanel cannot speak angrily enough of the Christians and renegade Jews who try to make allegorical interpretations of the words of the messianic prophets. For him there is not the slightest doubt that all the prophecies will be fulfilled in the most literal sense.

If Abravanel made use of materials relating to the history of the Galut, it was primarily in order to discover the stages of development leading to the expected end. He used an outline of the history of the Galut that had been compiled by Spanish Jews some hundred years before his time. This chronicle is sketchy and legendary, but Abravanel made no effort either to test its reliability or to supplement it with a chronicle of the earlier times. His chief interest—as was probably true of his predecessors who worked before him in a

similar direction—was in the eschatological consequences of the chronicle. This chronicle dealt with the great expulsions of the Jews from the European states since the thirteenth century, and Abravanel could add to it the historical experiences of his own time. For him, the expulsions of the Jews from the territories of the Spanish crown, from various German and Italian cities and territories, and from the principality of Kiev are the last stages in the historical process that moves in the direction of the messianic times.

These are not the speculations of solitary learned men and ecstatics, or of sectarian groups. They are ideas and convictions that in those days occupied the entire Jewish nation or at least the pious ones, whom they held firm and swept into widespread folk agitations resembling the Sabbatianic movement. But there was no other Jew of that time who could express these ideas with so much cultivation and relative learning, and at the same time with such profound and visionary pathos. "In the last thirty-two years," Abravanel writes in 1496, "such terrible things have come to Israel as no other nation has ever borne and no eye has ever seen since men have lived on earth; and no power of imagination can fathom the weight of suffering that has fallen upon all who bear the name of Israel." This means for him that the process of redemption has already begun. Holding such a view, he can have no interest in the question of the real causes, primary or secondary, that might have led to the earlier expulsions or to the Edict of 1492. On the other hand, so experienced and practical a man as Abravanel had not the slightest thought of making any effort either to improve the situation of the Jews or to make any outward preparations for their redemption. There was no point in trying to improve conditions, for redemption

was already on its way. And God alone determines the individual stages of the process: The Jews were not permitted to free themselves from the Galut before the appointed time.

The Christians of the time relate how in July of 1492 the exiled Spanish Jews, encouraged by their spiritual leader, went singing from their homes to the sea, confidently expecting to see a second parting of the waters. The miracle did not take place; it must, then, occur another time. And the aged Isaac Abravanel did not even travel to the soil of Palestine, of whose messianic wonder-working power he had tried so long and so obstinately to convince the doubters.

CHAPTER X

THE NEW HOPE OF REDEMPTION

This time it seemed that redemption had really come. Around 1560, a Safed rabbi, in the course of a purely legal decision, could write: "No Jew has lived in Spain for seventy years, and we are sure that no Jew will ever again pitch his tent there, for God will soon gather together the scattered remnants of his people of Israel."

In the main, it was the Spanish Jews, and the Marranos among them, who championed the movements for the ending of the Galut. Worldly tendencies and the stronger religious tendencies worked together. The developed political sense and the differentiated economic capabilities of the Sephardic Jews had a decisive influence in the practical efforts to build up Palestine. In the sixteenth century, Spanish Jewish statesmen in the service of Turkey made the first considerable purchases of land in Palestine to be used for Jewish purposes. The Spanish Marranos were also the only ones of whom it may be said that they attempted to influence the internal and external affairs of the governments of the time in an effort to practice a kind of international Jewish politics.

On the other hand, there was a need to make atonement that drove the Marranos to the cleansing soil of the Holy Land. This need was also behind the efforts to re-establish the Sanhedrin. Those who in Spain had forsworn their faith under the threat of force and broken the commandments wanted a properly constituted authority, empowered to impose on them the earthly penances provided in the Talmud, and thus

save them from heavenly punishment. But the eyes of the believers were really on a higher object than this: They wanted to carry out the teaching of Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon, according to which the re-establishment of ordination and of the highest Jewish court in Palestine was a necessary precondition to the redemption. The failure of these efforts shows only how the spiritual relationship of Jewry to Palestine had in the past three hundred years moved one step further from the solid ground of reality. For Maimonides, the *Nasi* in Eretz Israel was a real person, who could still claim a certain degree of authority up to the time of the First Crusade, and whose functions could be revived or even extended. Among the redemption-seekers of the sixteenth century, these facts were long forgotten. Their historical knowledge came only from the Talmud, according to which ordination was dissolved in the fourth century with the victory of Christianity. In the authoritative interpretation, ordination could only be restored by the prophet Elijah. Consequently, there could be no serious thought of any earthly preparations for redemption. So Palestine became more and more a place for individual religious penitence, the refuge of mystics and pious brotherhoods, who tried to hasten the end by meditation, mutual moral control, and good works. The tremendous growth of Kabbalism placed the Galut problem in so wide a cosmic and metaphysical frame that it finally became almost impossible to get back to reality. The religious lyricism that awakened anew in this atmosphere possessed the special magic of finding in the Jewish fate allusions to the divine emanations; but it hardly owes its greatness to the direct impact of historical experience.

After a few generations of this enthusiasm, Palestine loses again its political significance for the Diaspora.

Eretz Israel is the "Holy Land," whose "messengers of God" broaden and strengthen the faith among the dispersed, but whose Jewish communities are kept alive through the support of the Diaspora. Under cover of a mystical excitement condensed to the highest possible degree of intensity, the Jews in Palestine struggle, as they struggle in the Diaspora, for mere daily existence, and gradually the rational instincts assert themselves, returning the Jews to a consciousness of the natural conditions of their life.

CHAPTER XI

THE EARLIER (NON-SKEPTICAL) RATIONALISM

The same epoch which saw so exalted a development of mystical teachings also produced the first tendencies toward a scientific and critical examination of Judaism. The Renaissance and the Reformation gave rise in Europe to the comparative study of religion, which was to prepare the way for a modern and scientifically grounded tolerance. At first, to be sure, we find only limited manifestations of respect for the Jewish religion and its followers. The Christian scholars were interested in the Jews of their time because they saw in the Jews the legitimate and living heirs of ancient Judaism, but essentially the religious scholarship of the Renaissance continued the tendencies of medieval Christian polemics, which were directed against the Jews. The scholars of the Renaissance tried to discover Christian truths hidden in Jewish religious writings, and thus to give a learned backing to Christian propaganda among the Jews. On the whole, the medieval view of Judaism remained in force. The Jews were recognized to be a people in bondage, but a people that no longer had a clear metaphysical basis for its existence and that, consequently, had to be eliminated, in the medieval sense, through baptism. Only the means of persuasion had become more humane, more learned, more tolerant.

Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that the Jews themselves should have felt an analogous impulse to compare their tradition with the classical-

Christian tradition, in order to lay the foundations of a science of Judaism for purposes of apologia. Such varied figures as Isaac and Judah Abravanel (*ca.* 1460-1535), Elijah del Medigo (*ca.* 1460-1497), Solomon ibn Verga (late fifteenth century), Gedaliah ibn Yahya (sixteenth century), Azariah de Rossi (1513-1578), and Judah Aryeh Modena (1571-1648) worked along these lines and thus came into close contact with the Christian scholars of their time. Later the Marranos of the Netherlands continued along the same line, and even the Ashkenazim did not remain unaffected.

These Jewish scholars brought the treasures of Jewish-Hellenistic literature back into the consciousness of their people and incorporated the ideas of that literature in the rabbinical tradition of the Middle Ages. However, the political conditions of the time made it impossible for them to adopt the propagandistic tendencies of their Hellenistic ancestors. They could not build up their new scientific scholarship as an active force, as the Christians did; they were forced to keep it within the limitations of apologetics. In debates with the Christians, the messianic hope still centered primarily upon the hope for direct political liberation. Philological-historical criticism was employed as a defense against particular slanders. A remarkably high sense of historical criticism was exercised in dealing with such problems as the origin of the ritual-murder lie, the Evangelists' accounts of the trial of Jesus, Josephus' disputed testimony concerning Christ, and the treatment of Judaism in the writings of Tacitus. All the Jewish writers of this age proclaim with one voice their loyalty to the state and the rulers of the state. Azariah de Rossi, in his purely philological and antiquarian work *Meor Enayim* ("Light of the Eyes"), written in the years 1571-1575, devotes an entire section

to a compendium of all the passages in the Hellenistic literature (for which he felt a spiritual affinity) that expressed loyalty to the Roman Empire, the Emperor, and the Hellenistic kings. This material is used very frequently in later apologetic literature. Azariah tries to protect the Jews against the charge that the messianic ideal is connected with ideas of political revolution. The Jews, he writes, can take no part in the political rivalries of the nations: they pray for the peace of the *whole* world. The messianic time will reveal itself as a sudden spiritual miracle, more or less as Philo had expected. Azariah revives the Hellenistic-Jewish idea that the commandment, "Thou shalt not revile God" (Exod. 22:27), requires that one respect the religion of others. Thus a spirit of humanity prevails on all sides.

In its internal character, historical and philological criticism concerns itself only with certain literary trends and traditions that do not touch upon the foundations of the talmudic system. Judah Aryeh Modena goes furthest with his criticism of Kabbalah in the book *Ari Nohem* ("The Lion Roars"), written in 1639, but his observations are not new, and he could not possibly have believed that he was thus touching in his criticism upon traditional Judaism. He attacks certain isolated and notoriously newfangled practices, and he does not hesitate to make fun of certain outward peculiarities of the Jews; in particular, he makes some very bitter observations about Jewish national pride. But it is this most zealous of the zealous Jewish apologists of his age who makes the moving observation that has remained in Jewish consciousness since the Middle Ages: The religion of the Jews is a religion of children —"For Israel is a child, and therefore I love him" (Hos. 11:1). Judah Aryeh Modena and those who thought as he did have been reproached with great

injustice for their hypocrisy and lack of faith. He and most of his circle lived with complete conviction according to the basic elements of talmudic Judaism; but the critical and realistic currents of the time exercised an inevitable influence. The critical tendency has no very catastrophic effect on the mass of tradition, but it reveals at last the long concealed disparity between the religious convictions of the Jews and the real facts of their life.

It is not to be denied, however, that this earlier rationalism embodies a certain self-abasement and self-mockery: the weaknesses of the Jews are comfortably exposed. Certain elements of Jewish religious life, felt to be abuses, are held up to scorn, with the idea that such criticism may help to save the Jewish religion as a whole. But no reforms are suggested, either religious or political: that is all in the hands of God, whose inscrutable will has decreed the servitude of the Jews and all the consequences of that servitude.

This may explain this group's complete unconsciousness of all political and historical questions—which indeed remained a characteristic of Jewish rationalism. This is particularly striking in an age that witnessed a great deepening of political and historical thought. The Jewish chronicles of the age exhibit at their best a certain degree of interest in the materials with which they deal, but this never leads to any more profound treatment of the material, not even to a church or sect history such as the Christian writer, Basnage (1653-1723), wrote at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Neither do new ideas about the process of Jewish history in general appear. What the age had to say on this subject was found most clearly in the writings of Abravanel; any further speculation was left to the mystics. Apologetic writing concerned itself only with iso-

lated points that could be examined in theological or literary terms. The handling of legal and political questions remained in the hands of practical men, and the material interests of the Jews were defended in political documents that were buried in official archives.

Historical and juristic studies of the situation of the Jews, which appear in all European countries from the seventeenth century on, were undertaken only by Christians—and then usually for antisemitic or tax purposes. In the surviving Jewish literature of the age, there are only two small books, very dissimilar, that stand out from the rest. In these books the realities of the Jewish destiny are seen more profoundly and more comprehensively.

CHAPTER XII

SOLOMON IBN VERGA

It was Solomon ibn Verga, who was hardly a generation younger than Abravanel and grew up under more or less the same historical conditions, who made the first critical examination of the historical concepts of Judaism. Ibn Verga belonged to the educated Spanish Jews of the circles that moved close to the world of high politics. In 1492, he emigrated to Portugal with other exiles; from 1497 to 1506 he seems to have lived in Portugal and outwardly conformed to the compulsion to profess Christianity; he died in Italy. In Italy, he seems to have become acquainted with the ideas of such men as Guicciardini and Machiavelli, and it can also be demonstrated that in writing his book *Shevet Yehuda* ("Rod of Judah") in the twenties of the sixteenth century, he had before him a certain moral and political novel by a Spanish author, very widely read at the time. *Shevet Yehuda* is a sort of fictional anthology, curiously combining history and poetry, humor and bitter earnest. What the author is really concerned with can easily be discerned in spite of the fictional framework. The book attempts an analysis of the real and psychological causes for the expulsion of the Jews from Spain, and an examination of the whole problem of the origins of antisemitism and the sources of the political misfortunes that have pursued the Jews in all ages. The author gathers together the materials of Jewish apologetics, practical and theoretical, from the centuries before his time; he orders this material with the political understanding of a Renaissance politician and

subjects it to the light satirical test of Italian skepticism.

Abravanel had already displayed a certain tendency to examine the first—and to some extent also the second—Jewish state according to the laws of natural growth and decay. Ibn Verga goes further in this direction, writing with a light tone that yet should not deceive as to the seriousness of his thinking. The fall of the Jewish commonwealth accords with a law of nature: Height of fortune is inevitably followed by downfall. But the Jews themselves precipitated their fall, for they fought among themselves and thus caused other powers to intervene in the affairs of the Jewish nation. One can here observe how conditions in Italy at the time, and the political theories current in Italian thought, bring a new illumination to bear on facts that were well known and were in the Middle Ages employed very often for moralistic reflection. But there follows a still more important argument: Trusting to God, the Jews neglected their military skills, and when God withdrew his mercy from them because of their sins, they remained "twice naked." A well-known passage from Josephus is interpreted as meaning that too great a trust in God (not astrological superstitions, as Moshe ben Maimon has it) led to the political downfall of the Jews. This is a very characteristic idea for a man of the Renaissance, and is later expressed even more clearly by Simone Luzzatto and Spinoza.

Ibn Verga is much more outspoken in his inquiry into the causal background of the Galut; indeed, this subject is considerably easier to treat from the standpoint of a formal orthodoxy. Ibn Verga sees the Galut as a trial imposed by God, but he is ready to admit a causal-historical interpretation in addition to the religious interpretation: "For if our merits are small, then

the Galut will continue through natural causes." Earlier thinkers had admitted this also, but one feels that in the last analysis they all tried, even in the Galut, to lift themselves out of the realm of natural causation, on which Ibn Verga now tries very earnestly to concentrate. For the first time in all Jewish literature, he asks the question, soberly and directly: "Why do men hate the Jews?" And again he finds his answer in the laws of nature. Hatred of the Jews arises from a principle that can be observed to operate in all the happenings of the natural world, in the battle of the elements as well as in the battle of the stronger animals against the weaker. "The ruling nation seeks to transform other peoples into its own image."

However, the attitudes of individual classes of the Christian population toward the Jews calls forth a closer analysis, and this analysis leads Ibn Verga to the conclusion that the persecution of Jews arises from the uneducated mob and the incitements of fanatical popular preachers, while the enlightened rulers try to protect the Jews—at the very least for financial reasons. Indeed, the princes enjoy bringing learned Jewish individuals into their courts and exchanging ideas with them. The hatred of the people rests on religious fanaticism, stimulated by the monks, on economic hardship, on the envy of the Christians and the greed and arrogance of the Jews. The influence of the Jews in the political life of the nations seems not to be regarded with unfriendliness, provided that the Jews in high office comport themselves with suitable discretion. This analysis is applied especially to conditions in Spain before the expulsion, and it is therefore all the more striking that Ibn Verga fails to mention among the causes of the expulsion precisely that which is presented in the official expulsion edict as the sole and de-

cisive cause: the religious propaganda of the Jews. Since the time of the expulsion from Spain, Jewish apologetics deny the existence of such propaganda: the tendency is to tone down the question of religious principles, and, instead, to admit every possible weakness in the national character.

The Jews had at all times a special faculty for self-characterization. A high consciousness of their national mission, and the constant need to defend themselves against the criticism of their enemies developed in the Jews a tendency that has appeared in other peoples only as a late and modern product of historical self-consciousness. The Aggadah and the medieval *piyyut* (liturgical poem) express a love for the folk peculiarities of the Jews that far overshadows the traces of realistic criticism which are discernible throughout; Hellenistic apologetics lag far behind this vitality and clarity. Ibn Verga portrays his people like a realistic painter, driven by love no less than by a bitter over-eagerness to see the object as it really is. The irrepressible irony of the man of the Renaissance leads him to ridicule the proud feeling of election that animated such a man as Judah ha-Levi. The Jew of the Galut degrades himself by an uncritical acceptance of anti-semitic stereotypes that are obviously exaggerated. To be sure, Ibn Verga points out, the Galut magnifies all the failings of the enslaved, and, moreover, there is no one who can judge the Jewish people dispassionately. But in the end there remains in his writing only a small balance in favor of the Jews: They hold together, they take care of their poor, and it is wonderful how they endure martyrdom for their faith. This last a Christian fanatic of the Middle Ages would not have said, but on the whole, this is about the amount of praise that even men like Dohm and Herder could muster in favor of

the Jews. One expects something else from a Jewish writer. What is quite characteristic of Ibn Verga is the statement that the Jews could not live together in a state of their own, but would destroy themselves by internal conflict. This easy ridicule seems scarcely to permit any thought of a political solution of the Jewish question.

What remains? The only serious suggestion that the author has to offer is that the government should take legal measures to ameliorate the tension between Jews and Christians. The privileges of the Jews in economic intercourse should be maintained, within certain limitations, but any conspicuous prominence of Jews should be prevented by wise legislation. The best guarantee of peaceful relations between Christians and Jews lies in the cultivation of a certain religious tolerance—which, to be sure, can be found under the conditions of this time only in the courts of secular and ecclesiastical dignitaries, for there alone is it possible to hold free discourse on matters of religion and learning.

The book *Shevet Yehudah* relates in a shortened and distorted form the well-known Italian parable of the three jewels—that symbol of religious tolerance which Lessing later made famous. Other stories, made up by Ibn Verga himself, preach quite plainly—and almost frivolously—the doctrine of tolerance toward members of other religions. Every religion has its weak points, and the positive religions can maintain themselves only by a certain degree of imagination. Thus, for the first time, religious toleration is recommended as a matter of policy. But this does not mean a solution of the Jewish problem, for that problem, in spite of everything, is not to be removed from its religious context. The larger pattern of the traditional faith remains undisturbed. Ibn Verga pours forth his bitterest scorn on the

false prophets and the frivolous messianic dreams of his age, but he never gives up his faith in the coming of the Messiah and the eventual accomplishment of a full political liberation. All his realistic criticism, all his imagination, and all his sarcasm are in the end mere waves striking at the immovable dam of his belief in the divinely ordained Galut and the divinely determined redemption.

Solomon ibn Verga is the prototype of an enlightened Jewry that yet remained firmly rooted in traditional ways of thought. In his own time and for a long time afterwards, his book remained an isolated phenomenon, not so much because his thoughts were not shared by many, but rather because no one else dared or wished to speak openly of matters that in the last analysis did not seem susceptible of mere worldly clarification. It was plainly an inner constraint that led Ibn Verga to present his criticism in the guise of fiction. But if his book, in spite of its skepticism and bitterness, could become one of the most beautiful and most widely read of folk books, it is because of his loving, poetic-realistic grasp of life in the Galut—his realistic description of the key elements of the Galut situation. It is this quality of life, and not merely the elements of abstract thought to be found in his work, that gives him a special place in the history of the concept of Galut.

SIMONE (SIMHAH) LUZZATTO

Simone Luzzatto, who lived a full century after Solomon ibn Verga, continues in the same line though from a somewhat altered viewpoint. His *Discorso circa il stato degl' Hebrei* ("Discourse on the Condition of the Jews," Venice, 1638) was composed with the frank purpose of establishing the rights of the Jews vis-à-vis the Venetian state and pointing out the advantages that the state gains from its Jewish residents. Luzzatto combines with rabbinical learning not only the humanistic education of his circle but also a considerable acquaintance with the general political writing that had developed to such an extent in the Italy of his time. He is thus able to grasp the problem of the destiny of the Jews from new and different angles.

He is the first to deal with the Galut problem primarily in its relationship to the economic patterns of Jewish life—going far beyond the fragmentary observations of Abravanel. This leads him to formulate theories that are still current at the present time—although there is a tendency to pass over those elements that originally gave Luzzatto's ideas their meaning.

Wherever the Jews come, Luzzatto says, commerce flourishes; accordingly, it is to the interest of a wise government to take the Jews in and protect them. The Jews are a particularly useful instrument of mercantile policy, for they perform exactly those functions in economic life which no one else performs, and they can extend themselves no further than the government chooses to permit. They cannot, like other foreigners,

take possession of lands and property and thus become a political danger; nor can they, like other foreigners, enrich themselves and then make off with their gains, for they have no state and homeland of their own to serve as a refuge or to support them against the foreign ruler (the "host nation"). The prototype of the Jewish merchant in a foreign land is Joseph in Egypt, a man enslaved to a foreign state who serves his master best precisely because he is powerless.

At bottom, Luzzatto is here expressing with a greater display of economic learning what was known to every Jew of the Middle Ages. The Galut made the Jews a commercial people, and this gave the Jews their special and useful role. Luzzatto praises commerce for its value in spreading culture, but he sees no "historic destiny" in this intermediary role of the Jews. Commerce is a consequence of the social peculiarities of Jewish life in the Diaspora. The Jews may own no land, may practice no handicraft, may have no part in public life. All that is open to them is to become merchants. The large number of children resulting from the sexual ethics of the Jews forces them to devote themselves to commerce with particularly great industry, while their family solidarity and their international connections offer ready instrumentalities for business pursuits. In this lies the special virtue of the Jews that makes them useful servants of the state. But commerce in itself has no natural roots among the Jews—it is simply an economic pattern imposed on them by the Galut.

After Ibn Verga's work, Luzzatto's presentation of the national character of the Jews is the best that the earlier rationalism could offer. It is not until the modern Hebrew literature originating in Russia that we again find so vivid a picture. Luzzatto expresses a Jew-

ish national consciousness that disappears entirely in the later life of the Jews of Western Europe. And it is not a matter of isolated and fragmentary observations that one collects here and there in his book; the author sets out quite consciously to draw the character of his people, like a Theophrastus. The difficulty of his task is very great, for a nation is a compound of many elements. And it is especially difficult to construct any uniform picture of the character of the Jews, for they live all over the world and take on the colors of the countries in which they dwell. But this does not mean that their consciousness of the unity of their nation is weak; on the contrary, it is particularly strong in Luzzatto, and he finds distinct characteristics shared by the Jews of all countries. "A people of an enervated and weak nature, incapable in its present condition of exercising any political power, each occupied with his own particular interests, little or not at all with the interests of the whole. Their thrift approaches greed. They are great admirers of the past, paying little attention to the course of affairs in the present, many of them crude in their manners, devoting themselves but little to learning or to the knowledge of languages, but often going to extremes—according to the standards of foreigners—in the observance of their religion." Against this can be set: incredible steadfastness of faith; a unity of religious doctrine, in spite of the long dispersion of the people—or possibly because of the dispersion, as Luzzatto sometimes argues; a wonderful fortitude in the endurance of misfortune, if not in the meeting of danger; an unusual knowledge of the Scriptures; charity and hospitality to all members of their nation, even those from foreign countries; abstention from fleshly vices and purity of blood; exactness in the handling of difficult affairs; submission to all those outside

the Jewish religious community. "Their faults tend to be low and vulgar, rather than wild and great."

These few words of sharp-eyed criticism express the spirit of a humanist of Machiavelli's school, who finds in all the defects of his people none more painful than their lack of humanistic cultivation, political wisdom, and heroic greatness. But if he makes much of these latter failings, his purpose is only to make it clear that the Jews are no political danger to the state. They are not given to religious revolutions or political conspiracies. Their last insurrection (supposedly) took place in the time of Trajan, "when they still had some traces of their original wildness." "To the Jew—because of the conditions of the time and, more especially, because of the teachings of his religion—every thought of propagating his religion is foreign. He is concerned only with overcoming his own difficulties; he makes no effort to improve the situation of the Jews in general." It is "a custom that the Jews observe with great strictness, as if it were an unbreakable religious law, never to mix into affairs of state that involve the interests of rulers under whose protection other Jews are living." "Just as the Jews have no obligation to propagate their religion, so they have no idea of seeking any innovations to improve the situation of their nation as a whole, for they believe that any unusual change that can befall them must come from a higher cause and not from the efforts of men."

The expulsion from Spain, Luzzatto writes—following an exaggerated tradition—involved about half a million Jews. This included such men as Abravanel, highly educated and rich in political influence. But none of them made any effort to disobey the expulsion edict—even though, Luzzatto thinks, the edict was probably dictated by the fear of a political uprising of

the Jews. They dispersed all over the world—"an evident sign that the present doctrines of the Jews and their habitual behavior incline them to submissiveness and humility before their rulers." Luzzatto may have known of the rather insignificant and fruitless conspiracies against the Inquisition in which Spanish Marranos engaged during the eighties of the fifteenth century, and this may have led him to his otherwise ungrounded considerations about the possibilities of a Jewish insurrection. For the most part, however, he simply brings into the light of a modern political atmosphere the tendencies that became clear in Jewish life during later centuries.

In the system and sharpness of his analysis, and in his interest in economic and statistical material, Luzzatto goes far beyond Solomon ibn Verga. But he lacks Ibn Verga's passion for knowledge and the historical emotion that grips Ibn Verga as a man writing under the direct pressure of a great catastrophe. Luzzatto is essentially a temperate apologist. If he describes Jewish character, if he analyzes the attitude of the various groups of the population towards the Jews, if he deals with the situation of the Jews in various countries, and the reasons for their being received in certain countries and expelled from others, it is all in order to refute the various arguments raised against the residence of Jews in Venice. Every country has its own particular Jewish question; in Venice, the tension between citizens and Jews is easier to overcome than anywhere else; Luzzatto does not discuss the historical destiny of the Jewish nation as a whole. The larger trends of Jewish history are fixed, and he describes them anew with the pen of the humanist.

All nations, he observes, have their set periods of good fortune and decline, as the classical thinkers

knew. Either a nation succumbs entirely to other nations, or at best a few fragments survive. But the Jewish nation retains its essential identity, in spite of unending separation and dispersion. This could not be made possible through the strength of the Jews themselves; the survival of the Jews is due to the providence of God, who preserves them for ends that he alone knows. "And though enslavement and dispersion are the greatest evils that can befall a nation, since they make the people cowardly and lowly, exposing them to the scorn of all others, so are these evils also the best means for survival, since they purge the enslaved people of pride and vanity and keep them from arousing envy and suspicion in their rulers."

The nations acquire immortal glory through acts of warfare and the attainment of knowledge. And the Jews, too, were great in these accomplishments so long as they were found worthy of God's grace. Shortly before their national downfall, as though it were the last bright blaze of a candle before it goes out, the Jews, unaided, set themselves against the power of Rome and fought with their weapons in their hands for their freedom and their faith. But the political catastrophe brought with it also a spiritual ruin; the Jews were different from the Greeks. A fierce desire to retain the purity of their religion kept the Jews from humanistic learning, though they should have devoted themselves to it precisely in order to clarify their religious conceptions. Time, like the waves of the sea upon a shore, annihilated precious specimens of Jewish learning and heaped up in their place worthless fragments and muck. Only Philo, Josephus, Maimonides and the other Jewish philosophers of the Middle Ages seem to have raised themselves above the debris of their tradition. In addition, there are also a few philosophically elabo-

rated Kabbalistic doctrines that are worth mentioning. And the Talmud remains the undisputed authority. This is all that Luzzatto can find to praise in the living Jewish religiosity of later times.

All he can offer as a means of relieving the difficulties of the time is the advice to mitigate as far as possible the tensions between the Jews and the Gentiles. The tolerance Luzzatto asks of the rulers does not flow from religious rationalism, as it does in the mind of Ibn Verga, but is based on the principle of *raison d'état.* Not economic interests alone, but the political prestige of the state as well, make mild treatment of the Jews advisable, for such treatment bears witness to the wisdom and justice of the regime. Tolerance can also be asked in the name of a historically oriented humanity. The Jewish nation is like the torso of an antique statue. "As the crumbling fragment of an old statue by Phidias or Lysippus is precious, so must the relics of the ancient Hebrews not be despised, though disfigured by suffering and misshapen by servitude, for all agree that the divine artist once embodied in the likeness of this people the rule and institutions of life."

Jewish ethics, he points out, place no hindrance in the way of tolerance, for the basis of the Jewish religion is a universal humanism and general forbearance toward all others who abide by the prescripts of natural morality and have a concept of a higher divine cause. (Luzzatto says, incidentally, that the Jewish religion is far closer to the Catholic Church than to reformed Christianity.) Thus Luzzatto goes furthest of all the early writers in attempting to overcome the principal blocks that stand in the way of community between Jews and Christians. In this respect, he holds only to the Mosaic law, which—in contrast to the institutions of the Greeks and Romans—is concerned with

the well-being of all humanity; every later authority has to yield to the principles deduced from the Bible. So far as the practical life is concerned, the Jews are always ready, he points out, to offer their money to help their needy fellow citizens, and they would be even ready to give their blood for the defense of the state.

Even if one takes into account the fact that Luzzatto, in writing a work of apologetics, might have concealed his innermost connection with Judaism, still, in the broadness of his outlook and the candor of his expression he leaves no serious gaps. As far as a strong traditional faith and an unshaken belief in redemption could go along with rationalism, Luzzatto seems to have gone. Luzzatto wants to refine through humane culture the concepts of the Jewish faith and the principles which rule behavior toward those of different faiths. In this effort his critical tendencies go far beyond the medieval philosophers, but without leading to any consequences destructive of faith. He finds standards for his criticism in the Bible, in philosophy, and in humanistic learning, but not in the specifically Jewish tradition. He does not bring the humane attitudes he longs for into any internal relation to the processes of Jewish history, and they are not in his eyes the aim and fruit of the Galut. His political-humanistic thinking brings the problem of the Galut back to the elementary concepts of freedom and servitude. This sort of rationalism knows no theology and no philosophy of the Galut. The Galut is simply bleak—lacking political freedom and lacking in consequence all higher culture. Only God knows its significance. It is a fact that in Jewish history the natural law of the rise and decline of nations is overcome—but this fact comes from no spiritual force within the Jewish people: the cool an-

alyst knows only too well the weaknesses of his people that make them incapable of any energetic political action. But it never occurs to him that the situation can be changed in any way. For his faith in the Messiah and in the operation of God's will in history is unbroken; no self-criticism can weaken his proud faith in Judaism. For this cool and yet courageous observer of history, next to the laws of causation—and as a factor of equal strength—there always stands the will of God, who leads the naked and exhausted body of the Jewish people on ways that no human mind can fathom.

The Galut ideas of the later rationalists branch off from here. All of them in their various ways worked with fragments taken from Luzzatto's complete and closed interpretation. But it took almost a century and a half before any attempt was made to work out a similarly comprehensive and clear analysis of the Jewish situation; then, indeed, the attempt was made by a Gentile, Christian Wilhelm Dohm. As a whole, Luzzatto's book had no effect. It was a disastrous thing for later Jewish history that the later rationalists in their political tendencies did not follow out Luzzatto's thinking but turned their criticism—following the path of Marrano skepticism—mainly toward the Jewish religion, forsaking the idea of the nation as a whole, and striving for the permanent settlement of the Jews as citizens of their various homelands. A man like Moses Mendelssohn, looking for support in the Jewish tradition, revived the unclear apologetic of Menasseh ben Israel rather than the strong critical writing of Luzzatto—whose terms he occasionally used without acknowledgment.

Indeed, Luzzatto has one essential error in common with those who followed him: in the last analysis, he made the destiny of the Jewish nation dependent solely

upon God and separated it from the virtues of the nation itself—in contradiction to the older faith. And by this separation he helped to bring both factors—faith in God *and* faith in the nation—all the more quickly under the withering glance of skepticism.

CHAPTER XIV

THE MARRANOS

The traditional picture of the Galut was more decisively changed by the Marranos, who, after the expulsion of the Jews from Spain and Portugal, defended their existence and their religion for a very long time in a secret struggle, since—particularly after the beginning of the seventeenth century—they had no opportunity and lacked the resolution to emigrate and settle in other countries. After they became the only, if illegitimate, representatives of Judaism on the Iberian peninsula, the characteristics peculiar to their situation became more pronounced, when compared to the situation of the fifteenth century.

The Marranos became a separate caste with a special social structure—very much like the assimilated Jews of later times. Marriages occasionally took place between rich Jewish women and impoverished "Old Christians," but in general such marriages were disapproved of. The New Christians bound themselves into an organization informally recognized by the state, paid special taxes, and defended their special interests in dealings with the government and the Church. They were known as people who practiced Jewish rites and followed Jewish traditions in secret, in spite of strong measures taken to control them. They were under the constant scrutiny of the Inquisition, which descended upon them from time to time and delivered Jewish martyrs to the fires in greater or lesser numbers depending on the political situation. The publications circulated against them were antisemitic

in both the medieval and the modern sense. Not until the later seventeenth century are voices raised in favor of a more humane treatment of the New Christians, one that will transform them gradually, but by planned pressures and inducements, into true Christians. The expulsion of the Marranos was often discussed but never carried out because of considerations related to the economic interest of the state.

In religion, the Marranos led a double life. Their convictions were likely to waver back and forth between the two faiths. Their Jewish religious feelings were often no more than a half-conscious survival or reawakening of a slumbering tradition and national instincts. If one of these lost souls found his way back to Judaism, he was likely to embrace also the whole range of Jewish values—so far as he could discern them—often with an astonishing capacity to regain neglected Jewish learning. And this naturally included the whole Jewish conception of history. The return was not always easy, for spiritual as well as political and economic reasons, and there were many tortured souls who would not heed the Jewish propaganda that pressed upon them—propaganda that reads like a curious anticipation of modern discussions of the necessity and possibility of emigration to Palestine.

But even the religion that survived in the Marrano conventicles was for the most part entirely in accord with Jewish tradition. The prayers of the Marranos, which have been preserved in the archives of the Inquisition and in the rituals still practiced by the Marranos, are direct translations or adaptations of traditional Jewish prayers and *piyyutim* with their burning hope for political liberation and the re-establishment of the cult of the Temple. There is hardly a trace in these prayers of a new Galut theology or a specific Mar-

rano religion. Only the idea of inquisition and the necessity of secret religious services seem for these suffering Jews to belong inseparably to the Jewish faith. There are personal expressions, indeed, that rather frequently declare that one can be holy in the situation of the *Anusim* (forced converts) if one only acknowledges the unity of God and carries out the ritual as far as possible. In this way the mitigations which served the faithful Jews during a temporary period of religious oppression are made a principle of life for generations. Queen Esther, who "betrayed not her people and her fatherland," became the symbol of the Marranos. One idea, which appeared rather early, was disastrous: that one must not leave the land of persecution and servitude into which God has led the Jews until he gathers his people together from the four corners of the earth. The belief that history serves as a testimony to the will of God leads here for the first time to a virtual abrogation of religion itself. Others believed that by accepting baptism they could escape from the providence of God, enter under the influence of the stars, and let fate run its course.

The Marranos of Western Europe, who had emigrated from the land of the Inquisition, developed certain group characteristics that were not entirely new in Jewish history but had never before been so clearly discernible. These Marranos were bound to each other especially by the memory of their "home," which remained of great emotional importance to them (this is the first appearance of a strong emotional tie to a country of the Galut), by ties of family relationships to the Marranos in Spain and Portugal, and by the cult of the martyrs in their ranks—a development that shows some influence from the saints' cults among the Christians. In addition, they had their own Spanish-

Portuguese literature. This literature, like the Hellenistic Jewish literature, remained predominantly religious, and sought to express the traditional concepts of Judaism through a foreign language—which had the effect of making those concepts uninteresting to anyone who could not recognize the spirit behind them.

One of the earliest examples of Marrano literature is the book, "Consolation for the Sufferings of Israel," by the Portuguese, Samuel Usque (Ferrara, 1553). This is a historical-eschatological discussion of Israel that takes the shape of a complaint by the old shepherd Jacob and the reply of two prophets. The old theme is clothed in the form of a pastoral. The author, a man well read in the general literature of his country, consistently reaches back in his treatment of the fundamental question to Jewish sources and Jewish concepts. Where the Jewish tradition does not serve his purpose, he turns to Christian writers, simply reversing their antisemitic statements to make them favorable to the Jews. He projects the historical experiences of the preceding decade into the past; he sees the expulsion of the Jews from Spain and the suffering of the Marranos repeated time and again; the plots of the newer enemies of the Jews only illustrate the events of the past.

Here, for the first time, we observe a certain Jewish pride in the hidden influence of Judaism on the history of Europe. Whenever the Jews have been forced into conversion, one finds not only the remains of synagogues and families bearing Jewish names; one observes also that all these countries have become strongholds of Lutheranism and other heresies. Such indications, to be sure, are not seen as evidence that the underground Jewry of Europe acts as a force for progress; rather, the connection between Lutheranism and the Marranos is taken as evidence, on the one hand,

that the Jews cannot be assimilated, and, on the other, that history takes revenge upon those who impose their will by force. Usque adds no really new element to the Jewish concept of history. But there is some degree of humanistic culture and outward estrangement from the traditional in the fact that he sets beside the Bible story, as equally important, not only the history of the Second Temple but also the sufferings of the Middle Ages and of his own time, trying, as Philo did, to reach in this way a workable philosophy of history. He sees the workings of divine providence throughout Jewish history, from the beginning up to his own time. History is for him a continuous process of guilt and atonement, of the purification of Israel and the execution of justice on Israel's enemies. Jewish history follows a path of progressive martyrdom; while on earth the Jews take upon themselves the yoke of the nations, in heaven they move by degrees toward the farthest spheres, which are to be the dwelling place of those who are blessed with the crown of martyrdom. The suffering of the Jews in Spain and Portugal carried the historical process to fulfilment. On the battlefields of Italy, and in the struggle between the Germans and Turks, Israel is revenged upon those who have caused its suffering. The Diaspora, which had been driven to Spain as the farthest limit of the ancient world, has already started on its progress back to the homeland. Wandering Israel will again traverse the fields and mountains of the Holy Land, his "true mother"; after long years of barrenness the homeland will blossom with new fruitfulness, and the day of the Messiah and the Resurrection will bring the world's history to its promised conclusion.

In a later epoch, Menasseh ben Israel (1604-1657) makes a rather confused attempt to combine the think-

ing of Isaac Abravanel and Simone Luzzatto with the humanism of Amsterdam and the culture of the Dutch Marranos. His writings during the years 1650-1656 made him the most prominent literary fighter for a return of the Jews to England. The return to England probably came about mainly as a result of the very real offers that Oliver Cromwell received from merchants among the Marranos, but, as has recently been established, an important part in the negotiations was played by an Italian Jew, Rafael Supino, who was later one of the most eager standard-bearers of Sabbatai Zevi (1625-1676). This confirms an impression one gets from Menasseh ben Israel's writings: that political activity for these Jews was not primarily aimed at making it possible for the Jews to become citizens of the countries in which they lived, but was rather one mode in which they expressed their messianic hopes.

Menasseh is not alone in his thinking, and the most important of his ideas were already firmly fixed in his mind before the English Revolution and the rise of Cromwell gave him an opportunity to engage in practical politics. The Sephardic idea that the redemption would come after the Jews had been dispersed as widely as possible led Menasseh first to turn his attention to the Lost Tribes, supposed to be in America, and then led him to dream of a return to England, which contested with Spain the title of "the end of the earth." His politics is a logical outgrowth of the religious-messianic conception of history, already more than two thousand years old; this fact is easily overlooked, for the ancient concepts as they appear in Menasseh's work are clothed and disguised in humanistic learning. Menasseh is following in the footsteps of Eldad ha-Dani (ninth century) when in his "The Hope of Israel" (1650) he seeks the lost tribes not only

in the West Indies but also in China and ancient Abyssinia. Following Abravanel, he sees the great expulsions of the Jews as stages in the process of redemption. The martyred Marranos in Spain and Portugal strengthen the Jewish claim to redemption, while the influence of certain important Jewish personalities in the great courts confirms the fact that God has not forsaken his people. The wrathful hand of God is revealed in the misfortunes that have come upon the persecutors of the Jews in the course of history; and the political ferment of Menasseh's own time foreshadows the approaching liberation of Israel.

In his address to Cromwell and the Commonwealth (1655), Menasseh relies more on the arguments of the practical world. He points out the importance of the Jews in commerce in the same words that Simone Luzzatto had used, but he goes further than his predecessor in outlining the religious framework of this phenomenon. Since ancient times, commerce has been the chief occupation of the Jews—and this because of the special kindness of divine providence. After God deprived the Jews of their state, but without withdrawing his protection, he gave them an aptitude for commerce amounting almost to an instinct. This aptitude made it possible for them not only to sustain themselves but even to gain riches, by which they could win the favor of rulers and find new places to live. Since the Jews wisely refrain from seeking to own land—for they must always take into account the possibility of being exiled—they must devote themselves to commerce until they return to their own land and the prophecy is fulfilled: "In that day there shall be no more a trafficker in the house of the Lord of hosts" (Zech. 14:21). Then Menasseh goes further than Luzzatto: not only does he find the causes of the commer-

cial character of the Jews in the circumstances of the Galut, but he also definitely states that the end of Jewish devotion to commerce will come with the end of the Galut.

According to Menasseh ben Israel's exposition, the Jews, in addition to being useful economically, are also true and devoted servants of the state and are ready to sacrifice their lives for the defense of the state. There can be no objection on religious grounds to Jewish immigration. This Jew of Marrano origin, when entering Puritan England, like his predecessors feels obliged to refute the reproach of religious propaganda: any other course would go against both the principles and the interests of the Jews. Those facts in Spanish and Portuguese history which are not in harmony with this approach are simply denied. At this point Menasseh upholds the principle of political wisdom and justice, as Luzzatto, appealing to a Catholic audience, had done, but also in the name of a new and positive principle of religious toleration conforming to the spirit of the Puritans.

It is possible that the idea that religious tolerance is a step toward messianic redemption appears for the first time in this context. This idea however is not watered down into an evolutionary messianism, as later happened in the Enlightenment, but returns at once to its starting point. But there is no trace of a serious effort at realistic analysis and criticism of the Jewish situation. Menasseh ben Israel makes extensive use of the empirical materials to be found in Luzzatto, but he brings this material back into the stream of religious historical thinking, essentially undisturbed by his own humanistic learning or by the skepticism that was already apparent in his community.

The Marranos were the first among the Jews to en-

gage in a really searching criticism of the religious tradition. Uriel da Costa (*ca.* 1585-1640), because of his personal life, happened to become the best-known of those who, in the return from Christianity to Judaism, were led to engage in historical criticism of the Jewish "Oral Tradition." But an unknown author, who apparently belonged to this same circle, succeeded with the help of this kind of criticism in reaching a new positive position toward the vital questions of Jewish life. This appears in a short work, written before 1622, that was discovered in the middle of the nineteenth century among the papers of Judah Aryeh Modena (1571-1648) and was erroneously attributed to him.

The author hopes that the application of a radical process of selection to the elements of the oral talmudic tradition will create a purified system of Jewish ideals, which by the force of its irresistible superiority will lead to the messianic redemption and win the Jews their rightful place at the head of the nations. The Mosaic Torah, rightly interpreted, is for him the best expression of a natural religion. In its present form, however, the Torah, though not indeed falsified by Ezra, is the Torah given the Jews by Ezra and not by Moses (thus the author tortuously expresses himself). And, from the time of Ezra, partisan conflict has developed many different interpretations of the Torah. It was only after the destruction of the Second Temple that Jewish scholars created "a new order of life and almost a new Torah" to suit the needs of a people preparing to wander forth in the Galut. This new Torah was necessary. But the scholars did not perform their task properly. For, instead of lightening the burden of duties in order to make it easy for the nation to exist in the lands of its enemies, they made the most rigorous principles of the Pharisees into a permanent bur-

den, and even added new commandments; thus, out of pure love of power they ruined the nation economically, kept it from any higher cultural development, and brought upon it the hatred of other peoples. The hatred toward the Babylonian Talmud which was built up by the Karaites and the medieval polemicists here awakens with new strength. The Babylonian scholars, "who knew only the heaven above their heads," created a system of commandments in accordance with the needs of their country, as if the Jews were to live in Babylon forever. From this starting point the tradition grew into an immense and confused mass into which even so great a man as Moshe ben Maimon could bring little order. Were it not for this perverse development, the Messiah would already have come. For the other nations, who could create no religion by their own strength, would have adopted the Torah in its undistorted form, the Jews would have ruled the world, and the throne of David as well as the Temple in Jerusalem would have been re-established.

Thus the author sees in the Galut only a political misfortune that has become a continuing situation because of spiritual depravity. The Galut really has nothing to do with religious questions. No inscrutable divine purpose dominates it. Almost all that the Galut has created in religious value is repudiated. But a still vital national consciousness clings to the last remaining stronghold of the Torah and of the messianic kingdom of natural religion. How after all the centuries of a perverse development these are to produce a complete reversal, and how not only the Torah but the Jewish people itself is to be made capable of such a task—these things the author does not reveal. Apparently he, too, leaves the final decision in the hands of God.

From this sort of criticism it is only a step to the complete rejection of Judaism. Baruch Spinoza (1632-1677) is the only one of the Amsterdam Marranos who from his opposition to the Jewish tradition develops a peculiar new picture of history. (We shall outline this picture because it uncovers certain trends in the history of the Galut idea that cannot be proven by any other literary document.) In those portions of Spinoza's *Tractatus theologico-politicus* (1665-1670) that are devoted to this subject, he combines the causal-historical view of Jewish history, a tendency toward which has already been discovered in Ibn Verga and Luzzatto, with elements drawn from the Jew-hatred of the ancient heathens and the medieval Christians. Thus Spinoza uses the anti-Jewish arguments prevalent in the polemics against the Marranos and undermines the small area of religious and national security in which the members of his community, after hard internal and external struggle, had taken refuge. His feelings toward the Jews have an essentially Christian coloring, but he lacks the Christian faith, which at least attributed to the Jews a certain providential position in history. The Jewish religion is deprived of any religious significance in spiritual terms and the outward history of the body of the Jewish nation is subjected to a power that sometimes resembles natural law and sometimes the will of a cruel personal God. Once, indeed, the Jews were chosen by God, but only for a passing political task, like other peoples. And what has held the Jews together and enabled them to survive from the beginning of their history up to the present is really only their hatred of the other nations and the hatred of God and the other nations toward them. All the higher attributes that are praised in other nations Spinoza traces in the Jews back to the lowest instincts; using the words of

the Church Fathers, he throws their holy symbols into the dust. Following medieval polemics, he attributes the development of Pharisaic doctrine to the lust for power of the ruling class and to the opposition to Christianity. The laws of the Jews are not good; they were imposed upon them by the wrath of God. The Jews are a rebellious people. The history of the Second Temple was one of almost continuous civil war. The Jewish religion has made the spirit of the Jews effeminate (here Spinoza follows the Renaissance political thinkers), without creating any value to compensate for the loss.

If it is true that the Jews are held together only by hate, as Spinoza claims, then there is a simple consequence to be drawn from his concept of history; a conclusion he never expresses directly, to be sure, but which he approaches in his consideration of the situation in the Iberian peninsula. In Spain, where the Jews (New Christians) are admitted to all offices, they have assimilated, but not in Portugal. The Inquisition is to be blamed for the flare-up of religious-national feeling among the Jews, and not the Jewish fidelity for the Inquisition. This interpretation is historically untenable, and it entails a bitter insult to the Amsterdam Jews, who celebrated the memory of their martyrs in Portugal with fanatical pride. But from this argument there follows the practical doctrine that it is wiser not to persecute the Jews, so that they may of themselves be submerged in the Gentiles. The Galut has no real political meaning at all and therefore no historical significance either.

Nevertheless, Spinoza declares it not impossible that the Jews "one day when the opportunity presents itself may once again establish their state—so changeable are human affairs—and that God may choose them anew."

Thus God stands as an unpredictable factor even in the present history of this despised people, so that, for example, one cannot tell just what may be the significance of the Sabbatianic movement. But whether one considers this kind of election temporary or eternal, it certainly is not an election in a spiritual sense, and Spinoza himself will have nothing to do with it. His view of Jewish history carries the tendencies of the preceding generations' internal and external criticism to a conclusion that was impossible within the Jewish camp. His personal attitude toward Judaism is one that was unheard of before his time: he is the first Jew to separate himself from his religion and his people without a formal religious conversion.

CHAPTER XV

SABBATAI ZEVI

Only on the basis of the various spiritual tendencies that we have outlined in previous chapters could the messianic movement of Sabbatai Zevi (1665-66) have taken on its tremendous proportions. In this movement everything that had collected around the idea of the Messiah in learned and folk tradition suddenly came together. This time it was not a matter of religious propaganda creating excitement in single communities or single countries; for one year, the whole Diaspora was held in suspense, from Turkey to distant Yemen, in Italy, Holland, England, Germany, Poland, and even among the Marranos of Spain and Portugal. Side by side with the difficult and extensive talmudic-Kabbalistic learning, which the movement was forced to discuss and by which it was partly furthered and supported, there was a whole body of popular apocalyptic literature, telling of the sudden movements of distant tribes and of mysterious wonders that were supposed to have taken place in the Orient and at the gates of Rome. This messianic folk literature circulated in the most varied circles, and even among the most learned, who examined it carefully to test its arguments in behalf of the new Messiah for their authenticity in terms of tradition.

Such intensity of feeling, combining rational learning with mythology and mysticism in a faith that was truly a faith that moves mountains, such a mass movement over the whole world was possible only on the basis of a Galut idea that implied the imminent possi-

bility of the messianic end. Even the opponents of Sabbatai Zevi acknowledged that the movement of deep agitation and repentance that had spread over the world was a sign of coming redemption: all necessary conditions had existed, but at the last moment this generation had been found unworthy and an incomprehensible demonic power had halted the whole process.

Only on this basis can we understand the secret adherence to the Sabbatianic faith of many who otherwise remained quite unchanged in their ways of thinking and living. The first stage of the redemption was completed, the Galut of the *Shekhinah* was ended. How this could be reconciled with the fact that the Jews remained in bondage—on that point the new faith had no answer for its critics. We can see here the contradiction between the old messianic faith, which had always remained closely bound to the facts of reality, and all efforts to transform messianic redemption into a process fulfilling itself merely within the individual soul or in the immanence of history. Never before had the failure of a messianic movement brought the question so sharply into focus. Before this, every disappointed messianic hope had been followed by doubts and mass desertions. Now for the first time there seemed to develop within Judaism a new religion, or at least a noticeable deviation from the old faith—for the first time, that is, since the Karaites, who were also involved in a messianic ferment. The famous religious unity of the Jews was gone, and it became clear how right those thinkers had been who saw in political servitude one of God's measures to preserve the unity and purity of the faith. Before, there was really only one path leading away from the basic conceptions of Judaism, and this path went straight to the camp of the

ruling religion, whose existence precluded any kind of Jewish sectarianism.

But hardly had the bonds of servitude begun to slacken, hardly had the religious pressure from outside begun to weaken, when essential differences became apparent in the Jewish camp itself. Sabbatai Zevi abrogated and altered religious commandments. The new Jewish Messiah took on unmistakable characteristics of the Christian Messiah. In addition, there appeared among the extremists an outspoken "Marrano theology," holding that all the Jews had to become *Anusim* before they would be freed from the Galut, for "there shalt thou serve other gods, wood and stone." Thus the final consequence of that Galut theory is drawn, according to which the debasement of the Jews in the Diaspora serves to liberate the sparks of holiness scattered throughout the world. But a boundary was crossed on the other side of which there was only complete rootlessness and dissolution. The followers of the old tradition were right in setting up the firm foundations of the messianic tradition, which insisted upon political liberation and externally visible wonders as a barricade against this crossing. Sabbatai Zevi had brought no real proof of his election; he had "awakened love" too soon.

CHAPTER XVI

FROM THE ANCIENT FAITH TO A NEW HISTORICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

In the second half of the seventeenth century, the foundations of the old Jewish faith were already undermined from two sides by rationalism and by the self-contradictions of the Messiah doctrine. Nevertheless, the Judaism recognized as legitimate continued to exist until the middle of the eighteenth century, still unshaken in its ancient constitution and spiritual character. Essentially, this Judaism remained as it had been two thousand years before, or at least, if it had developed, it had developed only in nuances. It still upheld the same eschatological concepts of history, with the chosen people as center—except that the framework of this concept had been enlarged in the course of the centuries to include the historical and philosophical materials that had gradually accumulated around it.

Inner attitudes to history changed very slowly. Out of the compact and somewhat pugnacious doctrine of election had grown a naive mythology of history full of wonderful light and an involved and metaphysical system of historical speculation, half magical in its atmosphere. A rational philosophical trend that prepared the way for later skepticism split off from this system. But it all still remained within an identical historical framework, secured by tradition and by the naive faith of the people against essential changes. The most exalted speculations, the soberest rationalism, the grayest tones of everyday life—all remained bound to the firm realities of people, land, and Torah, past

and future greatness, and the inexplicable sufferings of the Galut. The people are kept together by a national consciousness unique in the world. The land is the *real* land of Palestine, however veiled by religious imagination and mystery, however bereft by political circumstances of its beauty and productivity. And the much criticized talmudic dialectic still leads always back to the miracle of the Torah. The religion renews itself in every generation through a strength that comes from the people and is at the same time mythos and purest intellect. The day-to-day fate of the people is still completely comprehended—as it was in the days of the Bible—through a firm faith in the direct influence of God upon every historical event. This is no timid spinning out of old dreams, nor is it mere inertia under the burden of an incomprehensible destiny; rather, it is a system of religious concepts—complete in itself, if overloaded—of which every representative of the tradition can give a clear account.

This old system of thought is by no means unhistorical, for it has history as its foundation; the decisive historical events of ancient and recent times retained their fixed place in Jewish thought, more than in other religious systems, becoming milestones in the story of the testing of God's people. No complex historiography could develop out of this system, for at bottom it is always a repetition of the same ideas applied to the changing materials of history. Precisely the last epochs before the emancipation yield very numerous accounts dealing with individual historical events, which are always treated as new examples for the trial, proving, and delivery of the people of God; the apocalyptic visions, which continue almost to this time, are the constantly repeated expression of an unshaken spirit that sees in history the signs of the coming end.

The greatness and unity of this religious world are not essentially disturbed by the frequently abstruse forms of its expression or the unpleasant external circumstances of social and economic life. The community life of the Jews of this time displays no weaknesses that are not to be found also in the Christian bourgeois society. The much criticized Jewish factors and agents in the courts of the German nobles did their good and their evil acts, just like the Christian courtiers of the time. The economic behavior of the Jews of the time displays the general virtues and vices of early capitalism—to the extent, at least, that the business affairs of Jews developed sufficiently to warrant the use of such a term. There never were any specific, religiously determined, Jewish economic traits. The exigencies of the Galut forced the Jews to do the best they could with the few means of livelihood that were open to them. Commerce with its drudgery and constant risk is regarded as a burden imposed by heaven, as a form of asceticism in a dismal world, but never as a value in itself, and economic success is no subject for religious contemplation. All of the above is not noted to extenuate the faults of this generation; but it must be understood that these faults were observed and criticized by the Jews themselves as abuses and signs of worldliness.

In the last decade of the seventeenth century, however, rationalism began its victorious progress through the world. In Holland and England, the principle of religious toleration was first proclaimed, and was applied, in part, to the Jews. The Jews were given no equality in terms of politics and citizenship, but they were permitted to practice their religion freely and were guaranteed a degree of human consideration that had never before been accorded to Jews anywhere in the world. This was at a time when in the Catholic coun-

tries of Southern and Eastern Europe, especially in Poland, the treatment of the Jews was determined by the blackest bigotry or the most senseless superstition, and when in Protestant Germany the Jews were hemmed in by a frustrating system of restrictions that was about to lose its religious trappings and turn into an instrument of race hatred and racist politics.

In the more favorable intellectual atmosphere of the western countries, which gradually spread also to Germany, there arose a new approach to the basic questions of Jewish life. The Jews who partook of the new rationalism were not, like da Costa and Spinoza, rebels against an established way of life; they were simply skeptics and men of pleasure, or even men who, with no thought of undermining the tradition that had been handed down to them, gave up their political ties and their responsibility to the Jewish nation as a whole, and tried to make themselves as comfortable as possible in their "homes" in the *Golah* ("Exile"). Such types had always existed, but from the end of the seventeenth century on they became steadily more numerous until they finally stood in the foreground of Jewish life.

The first clear evidence of this new attitude may be found in the book *Sefat Emet* ("Language of Truth"), by Moshe Chagis (published in Amsterdam, 1707). Chagis came to Western Europe as an envoy from Jerusalem in order to collect money for Palestine, if possible to improve the methods of collecting money, and, as was customary with the *sheluhim* ("envoys"), to preach to the Jews and turn their hearts toward the Holy Land. In passionate words taken from the tradition, he preached to the Jews of the real and religious significance of Palestine. But the lukewarm and the skeptical among the Sephardic Jews greeted him with

doubt and indifference. Their arguments were old, but at this moment they had a special importance, for they represented the starting point of the theories of two centuries. The value of the Holy Land is called into question with the usual arguments about the desolation of the country and the unfortunate conditions prevailing there in respect to political affairs and within the Jewish community. The assertion is made that, until the redemption, every country is as good as Palestine; that God hears men's prayers everywhere; that indeed it is contrary to God's command to live in Palestine, for Palestine must lie waste until the end of days. This is Marrano theology in a modernized and more comfortable form.

Chagis can classify these arguments as coming from skeptics who throw off the yoke of the commandments and think only of enjoying their wealth and their new political freedom. They consider their present home their Jerusalem, and do not concern themselves with the needs of the Holy Land or the needs of the Jews in Turkey, Germany, Poland, or Africa. These frivolous persons declare that they would be delighted if the Messiah came for the poor Jews, so that they might be left in peace; but if the Messiah is going to equalize the rich and the poor, why do they need him? And they do not fail to cite authority in the support of these arguments. These comfortable Marranos were accustomed to interpret the words of Jeremiah— "And seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captive, and pray unto the Lord for it; for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace" (29:7)—as meaning that it is a Jew's duty to remain in the Diaspora, whereas this passage had earlier been interpreted only as prescribing the obligation to pray for the peace of the world and its rulers. These skeptics even dared

to quote the words of the Talmud (Ketuvot 111a) : that "love must not be awakened too soon." Earlier, these words had been advanced against the false prophets who sought to force the redemption by an exaggeration of religious exaltation. No pious Jew would ever have thought of employing the passage in any way that could weaken religious ardor or shake that Jewish faith which rested on real values.

In Sephardic circles of this period we find for the first time an optimistic consciousness of progress. They feel themselves to have had a hand in the libertarian development of Holland. From the Sephardim of England and Holland, rationalism spread to the Jewish skeptics in France and even to the Jews of Germany. Moses Mendelssohn (1729-1786) merely gathers together the thought of his time and gives it an authoritative form, raised above mere libertinism. The tendencies of modern Jewish history that were set in motion in Mendelssohn's time have been exhaustively analyzed and criticized in recent times; we can only examine here some of the consequences of these tendencies in the history of the concept and conditions of the Galut.

Recent Jewish history has carried to its conclusion a long process of disintegration. The gap between religious promises and the debased body of the Jewish people, of which Jewish rationalists had before been aware, led to a complete or partial abandonment of the nation. Loss of faith in the national future and in the folk strength of the religion led to a denationalization of the religion. The nation's specific political constitution in the Diaspora and the consciousness of Jewish unity were destroyed. At first it was believed that this was only to reorganize Judaism legally and

socially on a higher, more objective, and more reasonable plane. In reality, it quickly became clear that the result of this effort was to replace the historically determined individuality of the Jew with a different individuality, no less determined by history. Such a transformation, however, proved impossible. The medieval difficulties in the way of the relations of Jews and non-Jews simply continued, though in a more humanized form; and, in addition, the tensions that first developed out of the emergence of the Marrano problem, unique in the late Middle Ages, became characteristic of the modern Jewish question. This was less a problem for the baptized Jews than for those Jews who, though they might remain in the Jewish camp, had nevertheless undergone a change of faith. For in reality what they had done was not to take over elements of European culture and incorporate them into their own religious-national organism; rather, they had given up essential elements of that organism in favor of different ways and views of life.

This change had come about through no visible external force, but through a conscious or unconscious moral pressure. Now the historical forces that in the course of centuries had formed the Jewish character were deflected from their path—a path that might have led to the rise of full, conscious, and responsible community life. The historical forces forsook the nation. The vision of Ezekiel, as Judah ha-Levi had interpreted it, was now fulfilled. Of the living body of the nation, there were left only scattered and dry bones, and no one could foresee that these, in the words of the prophet, would unite again into a living whole. The scattered segments of the nation either entered, in the process of assimilation, into new and fruitful

human and historical amalgamations, or they retained the stamp of the history of the Galut upon their inert and hardened flesh. Out of such conditions during a very brief period in Jewish history, a comprehensive historical construction was built up in the age of historical awareness that was accepted as true by both friends and enemies of the Jews and was yet, in a historical sense, more erroneous than any previous generation's view of Judaism.

The historical thought of modern Judaism still suffers from the effects of an improperly understood religious-political heritage. The old concept of history was abandoned, but it continued to have some hold on historical thinking; no one attempted a real and thorough analysis of the factors that determined Jewish history. Not only the national character of the Jews was misunderstood, but also—following medieval rationalism in this respect—the character of the Jewish faith, which flows from the people and is bound up with the destiny of the people, and can also be renewed only by the people. Attempts were made not to clarify the situation historically, but to defend it from a fixed standpoint. The Jewish apologetics of antiquity and the Middle Ages developed out of the need to defend certain conditions of which no one was in a position to know the causes and which no human effort could change. But in the modern world there is no place for apologetics; failings and difficulties are recognized and, so far as possible, traced to their origins and overcome. Only the human tendencies of Jewish apologetics remain valid. It is the privilege of the oppressed people to arouse the conscience of the victors and to draw the moral from a millenia-long history in which not human power but God was recognized as the determining historical factor.

The plan of this book now requires that I say one more word concerning the nature of the Galut in our times. All modern views of the Galut, from whatever orientation they arise, are inadequate: they are unhistorical; they confuse cause and effect; they project the patterns of the nineteenth century into the past. There really does not exist any serious and systematic effort to analyze the material of history, or any conscientious desire to understand and appreciate the ideas of earlier generations of Jews. This is true equally of the anti-semitic conception of the Galut as a symbol of political decay and general disintegration and exploitation, of the assimilationist idea that the Galut serves as an instrument for progress and the spread of culture, and of the religious theories of later Jewish theology.

Jewish theology is wrong in appealing to ancient Judaism's concept of a historical mission. The old idea of a Jewish mission was tied up with a particular conception of history and with the reality of political servitude that was to be done away with by the Messiah. The idea of the mission could be put forward only in time of suffering and need. It presented—together with the ideas of purification and atonement—only one of several interpretations of the Galut. Even for the Hellenistic Jews, the Galut did not have the particular and special significance that the early Christians ascribed to their own Diaspora. And the carrying on of a missionary task in the Galut must surely involve religious propaganda, which the Jews have given up precisely because of the pressures of the Galut, and probably for all time. In recent times, it has been often said that the old faith in the Messiah cannot be absorbed in the ideas of religious progress.

All modern interpretations of the Galut fail to do justice to the enormous tragedy of the Galut situation

and to the religious power of the old ideas that centered around it. No man of the present day, of no matter what religious orientation, dare claim that he is equipped to carry the burden of the centuries as did his forefathers, or that the modern world still presents the internal and external conditions necessary to realize a Jewish destiny in the older sense.

The Galut has returned to its starting point. It remains what it always was: political servitude, which must be abolished completely. The attempt which has been considered from time to time, to return to an idea of the Galut as it existed in the days of the Second Temple—the grouping of the Diaspora around a strong center in Palestine—is today out of the question. There was a short period when the Zionist could feel himself a citizen of two countries, and indeed in a more deeply moral sense than Philo; for the Zionist was prepared to give up his life for the home in which he had his residence. Now that the Jews have been denied the right to feel at home in Europe, it is the duty of the European nations to redeem the injustice committed by their spiritual and physical ancestors by assisting the Jews in the task of reclaiming Palestine and by recognizing the right of the Jews to the land of their fathers.

Rabbi Judah Liwa ben Bezalel of Prague, a sixteenth-century writer who was completely rooted in ancient Judaism, opens his book on the messianic redemption with the statement that the nature of the redemption can only be rightly understood through its absolute opposite, the Galut. The fact of the Galut itself is for him the decisive proof of the expected redemption. For the Galut is the abolition of God's order. God gave to every nation its place, and to the Jews he gave Palestine. The Galut means that the Jews have left

their natural place. But everything that leaves its natural place loses thereby its natural support until it returns. The dispersion of Israel among the nations is unnatural. Since the Jews manifest a national unity, even in a higher sense than the other nations, it is necessary that they return to a state of actual unity. Nor is it in accord with the order of nature that one nation should be enslaved by the others, for God made each nation for itself. Thus, by natural law, the Galut cannot last forever.

We may appeal to such ideas today with the consciousness that it is up to us to give the old faith a new meaning. If we seek to end the Galut, let us not attribute our desires to earlier generations; rather, we must draw from the ideas of earlier generations those consequences which follow from a changed spiritual approach to an unchanged political situation. The Jewish revival of the present day is in its essence not determined by the national movements of Europe: it harks back to the ancient national consciousness of the Jews, which existed before the history of Europe and is the original sacred model for all the national ideas of Europe. However, it is undeniable that this turning home must involve a coming to grips with the ancient Jewish consciousness of history, on whose foundation European culture constantly and repeatedly reared itself in the decisive epochs of its history, without wishing to acknowledge its debt in a serious and conclusive manner. The question is how we ourselves stand in relation to a belief whose foundations have held unshaken for more than two thousand years. For us, perhaps, the final consequence of modern causal historical thinking coincides with the final consequence of the old Jewish conception of history, which comes to us from no alien tradition but has grown out of our own

essential being: "*Our* eyes saw it, and no stranger's; *our* ears heard it, and no others'." If we today can read each coming day's events in ancient and dusty chronological tables, as though history were the ceaseless unrolling of a process proclaimed once and for all in the Bible, then every Jew in every part of the Diaspora may recognize that there is a power that lifts the Jewish people out of the realm of all causal history.

In the ten years that have gone by since the appearance of this essay, a chapter has been written in the history of the Jews and of the world that surpasses the most terrible imaginings. It would be presumptuous to attempt in a brief epilogue to take a stand with respect to these events. But even the most modest contribution to historical understanding may be of help in coping with the tasks of today.

It is our constant duty to keep alive before us and before other peoples the greatness of our historical past, in order that we may draw strength and confidence from it, validate our claims before mankind, and find the path that leads to the further self-education of the Jewish people.

We have introduced our own special values into history. And it was not only in the first great age of our history—the age of ancient Israel—that we created these values and made them a part of the human heritage. In the second age of our history that was no less great and lasted from the days of the Maccabees to the completion of the Mishnah, we created, with the Torah and the books of the prophets in our hands, a socio-religious commonwealth of a unique character; within the limits of a historically determined attachment to ancient ritual forms and mythical thought, we created a new culture, original and pure, which spread such a light over the decadent and barren Graeco-Roman world as had not been seen since the days of sixth- and fifth-century classical Greece.

From this culture early Christianity derived a large part of its substance and its ethical-religious strength. It created the foundations for European moral stand-

ards. It is during this period that our simple Jewish prayers originated, prayers which the nations, wresting out of their natural and authentic context, have been able to imitate but never to equal. The culture of this epoch—its beliefs, its rites, and its social order—dominates two thousand years of Jewish history, shackling them in the rigid bonds of dogma, to be sure, yet animating them with the religious strength of myth and eternal wonder.

It is during this age and on this very soil of Palestine that the first martyrs for the sake of faith arose. We taught the world the idea of martyrdom, and in the third great age of our history—the real age of the Galut —this idea was realized in the very body of the people. For two thousand years we suffered for the sake of the redemption of mankind; we were driven forth and scattered over every part of the earth because of the fateful interaction of the religious and political factors determining our history.

We went among the nations neither to exploit them nor to help them build their civilizations. All that we did on foreign soil was a betrayal of our own spirit. Nor, finally, did we go among the nations of Europe in order to convert them in the sense of that missionary ardor which animated our people in antiquity and which later animated the followers of Christianity. Once political limitations had destroyed the possibilities of conversion, our people had to content itself with testifying to its missionary vocation in the world by its mere existence.

Our place in the world is not to be measured by the measure of this world. Our history follows its own laws, maintaining its innermost tendencies in the face of the outward dangers of dispersal, disintegration, secularization, and moral and religious petrification.

Our task remains—in spite of the inevitable loosening of the bonds of dogma that held us together in the past—to seek our support in that principle which survived in us during all the distress of the past, the principle that is constantly being disclosed to us and yet whose depths will never be entirely plumbed, the principle that must surely overcome the present inner crisis of secularization, already several generations old, just as surely as the body of our people will endure and hold together despite all the dangers and difficulties.

Jerusalem Yitzhak F. Baer

$1.50

GALUT

"Galut" is Hebrew for exile. Since the fall of the Second Temple, the Jewish people have considered Galut the basic fact of its historical existence. It is a mirror of Judaism's own attitude toward its destiny, and is, as the author makes clear, a central concept in the study of Jewish history.

In this book Yitzhak Baer, an eminent Palestinian historian, traces the fluctuations of that concept through the centuries of Jewish life. Some Jewish thinkers saw Galut as political servitude, the result of national weakness; others as atonement for the people's sins. Some saw Judaism's reunion dependent upon the Messiah; others, as linked with national resurgence. But the concept always retained its core of belief in eventual redemption from exile, which made possible for preservation of Jewish identity through centuries of dispersal.

In the early Hellenistic-Roman period of the Galut, the Jews looked for a rapid liberation. But by the 7th century, when the Arabs invaded Palestine, the hope that Galut was a brief interval was abandoned. As a result, the desire for national reunification subsequently took the form of large-scale messianic movements. By the 16th century a new tendency of Jewish thought, influenced by the rising humanism, urged a more thorough adaptation to Galut as a home for Judaism. Baer considers Zionism the reacceptance of Galut as the chief fact in Jewish historical life, and as its culmination and solution.

YITZHAK BAER

Yitzhak Baer introduces to the modern reader outstanding Jewish spokesmen who through the centuries have reflected on their people's condition. Two such thinkers are from the 12th century: Judah ha-Levi, who wrote the first thorough discussion of Galut, to which he gave a noble, humane emphasis; and Maimonides, who in times of persecution buttressed and clarified the faith of his people.

Other Jewish thinkers are discussed in these pages: Isaac Abravanel, who combined 15th-century humanism with a passionate defense of Jewish values; Solomon Ibn Verga, who in the 16th century wrote the first analysis of Galut in causal-historical terms; Baruch Spinoza, who reacted to Galut in the 17th century by rejecting Judaism entirely; and Sabbatai Zevi who in the 17th century proclaimed himself Messiah in an attempt to lead the Jews out of exile.

Yitzhak Baer has devoted his life to the study of Jewish history. His chief interest is the medieval period. His most recent work is a definitive history of the Jews in Christian Spain, published in Hebrew. He has contributed essays to *Zion*, a Palestinian scholarly quarterly, and other magazines. Before 1930 he lived in Germany, where he was a member of the Jewish Historical Academy; since then he has lived in Palestine, where he teaches at the Hebrew University.

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